



JOHN BUNYAN.



JOHN BUNYAN.

THE
Jerusalem-Sinner Saved:
OR,
GOOD NEWS
FOR THE
Wilest of Men,

Being a HELP for
DESPAIRING SOULS:
SHEWING
That Jesus Christ would have Mer-
cy in the first Place offered to the
BIGGEST SINNERS.

The Second Edition.

In which is added, An Answer to those
Grand Objections that lie in the way of them
that would believe: For the Comfort of those
that fear they have sinned against the Holy
Ghost.

By JOHN BUNYAN of Bedford

London,

Printed, and are to be Sold by George Larkin, at
the Two Swans without Bishopsgate. 1689.

Price Bound 1 s.



THE EQUITY OF BLOOD

T O T H E

READER

Courteous Reader,

One reason which moved me to Write and Print this Little Book, was, because, though there are many Excellent Heart - affecting Discourses in the World that tends to Convert the Sinner; yet I had a desire to try this simple Method of mine

A.2. Whee

To the Reader.

Wherfore I Make bold *thus* to Invite and Encourage the *Worſt* to come to *Christ* for Life.

I have been Vile *my self*, but have obtained Mercy, and I would have my Companions in Sin partake of Mercy too, and therefore I have *writ* this Little Book.

The Nation doth swarm with Vile Ones *now*, as ever it did since it was a Nation. My Lit-

To the Reader.

Little Book in some places can scarce go from House to House, but 'twill find a suitable Subject to spend it self upon. Now since *Christ Jesus* is willing to save the Vilest, why should they not by Name be somewhat acquainted with it, and bid come to him under that Name?

A great Sinner, when Converted, seems a booty to *Jesus Christ*; he gets by saving such an

To the Reader.

one; why then should both *Jesus* lose his Glory, and the Sinner lose his Soul at once, and that for want of an Invitation?

I have found through God's grace, good success in Preaching upon this Subject, and *perhaps* so I may, by my writing upon it too. I have, as you see, let down this Net for a draught, the Lord catch some great Fishes by it, for the magnifying of his

Truth.

To the Reader.

Truth. There are some
most Vile in *all* Mens
eyes, and some are so in
their *own* eyes too ; but
some have their Paint-
ings to shroud their
vileness under, yet they
are naked and open
unto the eyes of him
with whom we have to
do: And for all these,
God hath sent a Savi-
our *Jesus*: and to all
these the Door is *open*.

Wherefore prethee,
Profane Man, give this
warning A. 4 little

little Book the reading. Come, Pardon, and a part in Heaven and Glory, cannot be hurtful to thee. Let not thy Lusts and Folly drive thee beyond the door of Mercy, since it is not lockt nor bolted up against thee. *Manasseb* was a bad *Man*, and *Magdalen* a bad *Woman* : To say nothing of the *Thief* upon the *Cross*, or of the *murderers* of *Christ*; yet they obtained *mercy*; *Christ* willingly

To the Reader.

lingly received them.

And dost thou *think* that those once so bad, now they are in *Heaven*, *repent* them there, *because* they left their *sins* for *Christ* when they were in the *world*? I cannot *believe* but that *thou thinkest* they have verily got the *best* on't. Why *Sinner*, do thou likewise: *Christ* at *Heaven* Gates, says to thee, *come hither*; and the *Devil* at the gates of *Hell* does call thee to come to him, *Sinner*, what

To the Reader.

sayest thou? Whether
wilt thou go? Don't go
into the *Fire*, there thou
wilt be *burned*! Don't
let *Jesus* lose his *longing*,
since 'tis for thy *Salvati-*
on; but come to him and live.

One word more and
so I have done. *Sinner*,
here thou dost hear of
Love, prethee don't *pro-*
voke it, by turning it into
mantouness. *He* that dies
for slighting *Love*, sinks
deepest into *Hell*, and will
there be tormented by the
remembrance of that *evil*,

more

To the Reader.

more than by the deepest cogitation of all his other sins. Take heed therefore, do not make Love thy Tormenter, Sinner.

Farewell.

THE

.540.11.

THE
CONTENTS
OF THIS
BOOK.

THE Text opened, Page 3
The Badness of Jerusalem unparalleled, they were the biggest sinners,
P. 4, 5, 6

DOCTRINE.

Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners,

The Doctrine proved, by many Scripture Instances, P. 9
P. 12, 13, 14

The Contents.

The amazing Grace of God, — p. 16, 17
The Apostles keep to their Commission, and offer Mercy in the first place to the biggest sinners, p. 15, 16, 17, 18

The Reasons of the Point.

1. **B**ecause the biggest sinners have most need of Mercy, p. 22
This is Illustrated, p. 24, to 28

2. *Because this redounds most to the spreading of the Fame of Christ,* p. 29
Proved and amplified, p. 30, 36

3. *Because by thus doing, others are the more encouraged to come to Christ for Mercy.* p. 37
Particular Instances of this, p. 40 to 44

4. *Because this is the way to weaken the Kingdom of Satan,* p. 46
The biggest Sinners Satan's Colonels and Captains, ibid
The bigger sinner breeds most of that horrible Vermin, Sin, p. 47
That vermin's experience about it; p. 48

5. *Because the biggest sinners are the best help*

The Contents.

1 helps in the Church, when Converted,
2 This is Illustrated by several particulars,
3 6. Because such when Converted, are apt
4 to love Christ most, p. 56
5 A pleasant Story of Martha and Mary,
6 Christ has but little thanks for saving lit-
7 tle Sinners, p. 66
8 Because Grace when received by such,
9 finds matter to kindle upon more freely
10 than it finds in others, p. 69
11 This is Illustrated by three or four Simi-
12 litudes, p. 69, to 70
13 A Note upon the Debanchery of the Times,
14 p. 72
15 8. Because by this means the finally Im-
16 penitent are left the more without ex-
17 cuse, p. 79
18 No ground for the Impenitent at Judg-
19 ment, for an excuse from the greatness
20 of their sins, why they came not to Je-
21 sus Christ, p. 78
22 Instances to convince them how it will go
23 with them then, for neglecting the grace
24 of God now, p. 79, 80

The Contents.

APPLICATION.

1. **B**Y this Doctrine we are shewed how to make a right judgment of the Heart of Christ to Men, p. 84, 85.
2. This shows also the Sufficiency of the Merits of Christ, p. 90
Such as his Merits are, such is his Grace, the one is seen by the other, p. 91, to 93.
3. Here is encouragement for you that think your selves the worst, yet to come to Christ, p. 93
Objections touch'd upon and dissolved, to obstruct our coming to Christ, p. 94, 95.
4. An Expostulation with great Sinners to come to Christ, p. 102
Other Objections touched, p. 103.
5. There is no ground for such to despair that would be saved by Jesus Christ, p. 106
Four kinds of Despairing, ibid.
Three sorts of Despair reasonable, and to be allowed, p. 107
Toc

The Contents.

The badness of that Despair that keeps us off from closing with Christ, sheweth in several Particulars, p. 111, to 114
 Despair the Devil's Master, p. 112

6. Since Christ doth offer means to the biggest Sinners, let them take heed that they lay right hold thereon, p. 115
 Take heed of presuming instead of believing, p. 116
 Faith, and Wild Faith, and how discovered, ibid.
 When Presumption puts its self in the place of Faith, p. 116, 117
 Three things to help the Jerusalem-sinner to know when to believe in Christ, p. 119
 The design of Satan, p. 120
 The danger of not Accepting, when Christ offers Mercy, p. 122

7. If it be so, then here is ground for those that are not Sinners of the largest size, to come to Christ for Mercy, p. 122, 123
 Objection answered, p. 123
 A Man comparatively a little Sinner, made by Conviction a great one, p. 124
 A lamentable cry for Pardon, a greeous thing with God, p. 125
 A right Plea for Pardon lieth not in our

The Contents.

numbring up, but ariseth from the sonfe
of the greatness of Sin, p. 125, 126

Heavenly Subtilty, p. 126

The comparison of little and great Sinners
explained, p. 127

One of the comliest Sights in the World,
p. 127, 128

A Caution to the great and little Sinner,
p. 128

8. By this Grace of Christ is made appear
the true reason of Satan's malice against
him, p. 128

Who Satan makes use of to manage his de-
fights against Christ. p. 129

How they stickle for Satan unawarees to
themselves. p. 130, 131

9. Considering this mercifulness of Christ,
let the Tempted harp hereon for their
comfort and consolation, p. 133

Satan's Master-piece, his Club and Maul,
ibid.

The way to foil the Devil, p. 134

At what season the Passover was first eaten,
p. 136

Nothing like Faith to help at a pinch, ibid.

Faith the Eye, Hand, and Mouth of the
Soul, ibid.

10. Here's

The Contents.

10. Here's encouragement for such as have
in Word or Deed, spoke or done badly,
in a day of Trial, p. 138

A comfortable Similitude for such, p. 138

Peter instanced, ibid.

Promises for such, p. 139

An Objection answered, p. 140

Christ has Bags of Mercy yet never broken
up, ibid.

11. Use for Exhortation to Ministers and
Christians to carry it to the World like
their Master Christ, ibid.

We should not be Austere, p. 142

We should not affect Worldly Grandure, p. 143

We should in Life and Conversation be ex-
emplary, p. 144

A gentle Reproof, ibid.

The Conclusion, p. 146

An Answer to those Grand Objections that
lie in the way of them that would believe:
For the Comfort of those that fear they
have sinned against the Holy Ghost.
p. 149, &c.

A Catalogue of Books, Printed and
Sold by George Larkin, at the
Two Swans without Bi-
shopsgate.

1. **S**olomon's Temple Spiritualiz'd :
Or, Gospel-Light fetch'd out
of the Temple at Jerusalem, to let us more easily into the Glory
of New-Testament Truths : Wherein
about Seventy Particulars relating to the
Temple at Jerusalem, are Explained,
and what they signify in Gospel-Times,
Unfolded, Price Bound 1*s.*

2. *The Acceptable Sacrifice* : Or the
Excellency of a Broken Heart : Shewing
the Nature, Signs, and Proper Effects of
a Contrite Spirit, Price Bound 1*s.*

3. *A Discourse of the Building, Nature,
Excellency and Government of the House
of God* : With Counsels and Directions
to the Inhabitants thereof, Price Stich'd
4*d.*

4. *The Jerusalem-Sinner Saved* : Or,
Good News for the Vilest of Men : Price
1*s.*

A Catalogue.

ing a Help for Despairing Souls: Shewing that Jesus Christ would have Mercy in the first Place offered to the Biggest Sinners. The Second Edition: In which is added, An Answer to those Grand Objections that lie in the way of them that would believe: For the Comfort of those that fear they have sinned against the Holy Ghost, Price Bound 1 s. All Four by John Bunyan of Bedford.

5. *Instructions for Children: Or, The Child's and Youth's Delight: Teaching an easie way to Spell and Read True English: Containing the Father's Godly Advice, directing Parents in a Right and Spiritual Manner to Educate their Children: With a Christian Catechism, wherein all the Chief Principles of True Christianity are clearly Opened: Together with many other things both Pleasant and Useful for the Education of Children.* Written by B. Keach Author of *War with the Devil.* Recommended to the Use of all Parents and Schoolmasters, by Hanserd Knollys, Price Bound 6 d.

6. *The Tutor to True English: Or, Brief and Plain Directions, whereby all that can Read and Write may Attain to Orthography, (or the Exact Writing of*

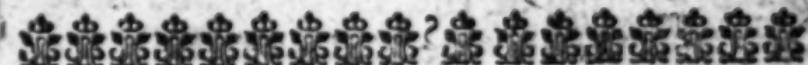
A Catalogue.

of English } as readily as if bred Scho-
lars. Very much conduced likewise to
the due Sounding and perfect Reading
all sorts of Words used in the English
Tongue. With an Introduction to A-
rithmetick, more easie than any yet ex-
tant. And several other Observations
of General Use: Especially for the use
of either Sex, and Forreigners. By Hen-
ry Care, Price Bound 1 s.

7. *The Great Discovery: Or, A Gol-
den Key to unlock the Greatest Points
of Divinity contained in the Old and
New Testaments: Wherein the Great
Design of God for the Salvation of Sin-
ners by Jesus Christ, in a Covenant-way,
is more fully laid open and discovered,
than has ever been hitherto done by any.*
By G.W. Price Bound 2 s.

GOOD

4603



GOOD NEWS For the Vilest of Men.

O R,

A Help for Despairing Souls.

Luke xxiv. 47.

— Beginning at Jerusalem.

THE whole Verse runs thus :
And that repentance and remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

The Words were spoken by Christ, after he rose from the Dead, and they are here rehearsed after an Historical manner, but do contain in them a formal Commission, with a special Clause, therein. The Commission is, as you see, for

B

the

the Preaching of the Gospel, and is ver-
y distinctly inserted in the Holy Re-
cord by *Matthew* and *Mark*. Go teach
all Nations, &c. Go ye into all the World
and preach the Gospel unto every Creature,
Matt. 28. 19. Mark 16. 15. Only this
Clause is in special mentioned by *Luke*,
who saith, That as Christ would have
the Doctrine of Repentance and Remis-
sion of Sins preached in his Name among
all Nations, so he would have the Peo-
ple of *Jerusalem* to have the first proffer
thereof. *Preach it*, saith Christ, *in all*
Nations: but begin at *Jerusalem*.

The Apostles then, though they had
a Commission so large as to give them
Warrant to go and preach the Gospel
in all the World, yet by *this Clause* they
were limited, as to the beginning of
their Ministry: They were to begin this
Work at *Jerusalem*. Beginning at *Je-*
rusalem.

Before I proceed to an Observation up-
on the Words, I must (but briefly)
touch upon two things: Namely,

1. Shew you what *Jerusalem* now was.
2. Shew you what it was to preach the
Gospel to them

To the first, *Jerusalem* is to be con-
sidered of, either,

1. With

1. With respect to the descent of her People: Or,
2. With respect to her Preference and Exaltation: Or,
3. With respect to her present State, as to her Decays.

First, As to her *Descent*: She was from *Abraham*, the Sons of *Jacob*, a People that God singled out from the rest of the Nations to set his love upon them.

Secondly, As to her *Preference*, or *Exaltation*, she was the place of God's *Worship*, and that which had in, and with her, the special *Tokens* and *Signs* of God's *Favour* and *Presence*, above any other People in the *World*. Hence the *Tribes* went up to *Jerusalem* to *Worship*, there was God's *House*, God's *High Priest*, God's *Sacrifices* accepted, and God's *Eye*, and God's *Heart* perpetually, *Psf. I. 76. 1, 2. Psal. 122. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. 1 King. 9. 3.*

Thirdly, We are to consider *Jerusalem* also in her *Decays*; for as she is so considered, she is the proper object of our *Text*, as will be further shewed by and by.

Jerusalem, as I told you, was the place and seat of God's *Worship*, but now decayed, degenerated, and apostatized.

The Word, the Rule of Worship, was rejected of them, and in its place they had put and set up their own Traditions: They had rejected also the most weighty Ordinances, and put in the room thereof their own little things, (*Mat. 15. Mark 7.*) *Jerusalem* was therefore now greatly backslidden, and become the place where Truth and true Religion was much defaced.

It was also now become the very sink of Sin, and seat of Hypocrisy, and gulf where true Religion was drowned. Here also now reigned Presumption, and groundless Confidence in God, which is the bane of Souls. Amongst its Rulers, Doctors, and Leaders, Envy, Malice, and Blasphemy vented it self against the Power of Godliness, in all places where it was espied: As also against the Promoters of it; yea, their Lord and Maker could not escape them.

In a Word, *Jerusalem* was now become the Shambles, the very Slaughter-shop for Saints. This was the place wherein the Prophets, Christ, and his People, were most horribly persecuted and murdered. Yea, so hardened at this time was this *Jerusalem* in her Sins, that she feared not to commit the biggest, and

and to bind her self by Wish under the guilt and damning evil of it; saying, when she had murdered the Son of God, *His Blood be upon us and our Children.*

And though *Jesus Christ* did both by Doctrine Miracles, and Holiness of Life, seek to put a stop to their Villanies; yet they shut their eyes, stopt their ears, and rested not, till, as was hinted before, they had driven him out of the World. Yea, that they might, if possible, have extinguished his Name, and exploded his Doctrine out of the World, they against all Argument, and in despite of Heaven, its mighty hand, and undeniable proof of his Resurrection, did hire Souldiers to invent a Lye, saying, *His Disciples stole him away from the Grave*; on purpose that Men might not count him the Saviour of the World, nor trust in him for the Remission of Sins.

They were, saith *Paul*, contrary to all Men: For they did not only shut up the Door of Life against themselves, but forbade that it should be opened to any else. *Forbidding us*, saith he, *to preach to the Gentiles*, that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, *Matt. 23. 35 chap. 15. 7, 8, 9. Mar. 7. 6, 7 8, Mat. 3. 7. 8. 9. Job. 8. 33, 41. Mat. 27. 18. Mar. 3. 30. Luk. 2. 65. Mat. 23.*

37. *Luk.* 13.33, 34. *Psal.* 2.22, 23. *Chap.* 4.10. *Mat.* 27.25. *Chap.* 20. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. 1 *Thef.* 2. 14, 15, 16.

This is the City, and these are the People: This is their Character, and these are their Sins. Nor can there be produced their parallel in all this World. Nay, *what World! what People! what Nation, for Sin, and Transgression, could, or can be compared to Jerusalem!* Especially if you joyn to the matter of fact, the Light they sinned against, and the Patience which they abused. Infinite was the Wickedness upon this account which they committed.

After all their abusings of wise Men, and Prophets, God sent unto them *John Baptist*, to reduce them, and then his Son to redeem them; but they would be neither reduced nor redeemed, but persecuted both to the Death. Nor did they, as I said, stop here; the Holy Apostles they afterwards persecuted also to Death, even so many as they could, the rest they drove from them unto the utmost Corners.

Secondly, I come now to shew you what it was to preach the Gospel to them. It was, saith *Luke*, to preach to them *Repentance and remission of Sins in Christ's*

for the Wildest of Men.

Christ's Name. Or as Mark has it, to bid them repent and believe the Gospel, Mar. 1. 15. Not that Repentance is a cause of Remission, but a sign of our hearty reception thereof. Repentance is therefore here put to intimate, that no pretended Faith of the Gospel is good, that is not accompanied with it. And this he doth on purpose 'cause he would not have them deceive themselves: For with what Faith can he expect remission of Sins in the Name of Christ, that is not heartily sorry for them? Or how shall a man be able to give to others a satisfactory account of his unfeigned subjection to the Gospel, that yet abides in his impenitency?

Wherefore Repentance is here joined with Faith in the way of receiving the Gospel. *Faith* is that without which it cannot be received at all: And *Repentance* that without which it cannot be received *unfeignedly*. When therefore Christ says, he would have Repentance and Remission of Sins preached in his Name among all Nations; it is as much as to say, *I will that all men every where be sorry for their sins, and accept of mercy at Gads hand thorow me, lest they fall under his wrath in the Judgment.* For as

Good News

I said, without Repentance, what pretence soever men have of Faith, they cannot escape the wrath to come. Wherefore Paul saith, *God commands all men every where to repent* (in order to their Salvation) because he hath appointed a day in the which he will Judge the World in Righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, *Acts 17. 30.*

And now to come to this *Clause*, Beginning at *Jerusalem*: That is, that Christ would have *Jerusalem* have the first offer of the Gospel.

1. This cannot be so commanded, because they had now any more right of themselves thereto than had any of the Nations of the World; for their Sins had divested them of all self-deservings.

2. Nor yet, because they stood upon the *advanc ground* with the worst of the Sinners of the Nations. Nay, rather the Sinners of the Nations had the *advanc-ground* of them. For *Jerusalem* was long, before she had added this iniquity to her sin, worse than the very Nations that God cast out before the Children of *Israel*, *2 Chron. 33.*

3. It most therefore follow that this *Clause*, *Bigin at Jerusalem*, was put into this

for the Wildest of Men.

this Commission of meer Grace and Compassion ; Even from the *overflowings* of the Bowels of Mercy. For indeed they were the worst, and so in the most deplorable condition of any People under the Heavens.

Whatever therefore their relation was to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, or *Jacob*, however they formerly had been the People among whom God had placed his Name and Worship, they were now degenerated from God, more than the Nations were from their Idols, and were become guilty of the highest Sins which the People of the World were capable of committing! Nay, none can be capable of committing of such *pardonable* Sins as they committed against their God, when they slew his Son, and persecuted his Name and Word.

From these Words therefore thus explained, we gain this Observation ; *That Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners.*

That these Jerusalem Sinners were the biggest Sinners that ever were in the World, I think none will deny, that believes that Christ was the best Man that ever was in the World, and also was their

Good Newes

Lord God. And that they were to have the first offer of his Grace, the Text is as clear as the Sun; for it saith, *Begin at Jerusalem. Preach, saith he, Repentance and remission of sins to the Jerusalem-sinners; to the Jerusalem-sinners in the first place,*

One would a-thought, since the Jerusalem-sinners were the worst, and greatest Sinners, Christ's greatest enemies, and those that not only despised his Person, Doctrine, and Miracles, but that a little before had had their hands up to the elbows in his Heart-bloud, That he should rather have said, Go into all the World, and preach Repentance and Remission of Sins among all Nations; and after that, offer the same to Jerusalem. Yea, it had been infinite Grace, if he had said so. But what Grace is this? Or what Name shall we give it, when he commands that this Repentance and Remission of Sins, which is designed to be preached in all Nations, should first be offered to Jerusalem, in the first place to the worst of Sinners:

Nor was this the first time that the Grace which was in the Heart of Christ, thus shewed it self to the World. For while he was yet alive, even while he was yet in Jerusalem, and perceived even among

for the Vilest of Men.

mong these *Jerusalem-sinners*, which was the most vile amongst them; he still in his preaching did signify that he had a desire that the worst of these worst should in the *first place* come unto him. The which he sheweth where he saith to the better sort of them, *The Publicans and Harlots enter into the Kingdom of God before you*, Matt. 21. 31. Also when he compared *Jerusalem* with the Sinners of the Nations, then he commands that the *Jerusalem-sinners* should have the Gospel at present confined to them. *Go not*, saith he, *into the way of the Gentiles, and into any of the Cities of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost Sheep of the house of Israel*, Matt. 10. 5, 6. chap. 23. 37. But go rather to them, for they were in the most fearful *plight*.

These therefore must have the *Cream* of the Gospel, namely, the *first offer* thereof in his Life-time: Yea, when he departed out of the World, he left this as part of his last Will with his Preachers; that they also should offer it *first* to *Jerusalem*. He had a mind, a careful mind, as it seems, to privilege the worst of Sinners with the *first offer* of Mercy, and to take from among them a People to be the *first fruits* unto God and to the Lamb.

The

Good News

The fifteenth of *Luke* also is famous for this, where the Lord Jesus takes more care, as appears there by three Parables, for the lost Sheep, lost Groat, and the Prodigal Son, than for the other Sheep, the other Pence, or for the Son that said he had never transgressed. Yea, he shews that there is Joy in Heaven, among the Angels of God, at the repentance of one Sinner, more than over Ninety and nine Just Persons, which need no repentance, *Luke 15.*

After this manner therefore the mind of Christ was set on the Salvation of the biggest Sinners in his Life-time. But joyn to this, this Clause, which he carefully put into the Apostles Commission to preach, when he departed hence to the Father; and then you shall see that his Heart was vehemently set upon it, for these were part of his last words with them, *Preach my Gospel to all Nations, but see that you begin at Jerusalem.*

Nor did the Apostles overlook this Clause, when their Lord was gone into Heaven: They went first to them of *Jerusalem*, and preached Christ's Gospel to them. They abode also there for a feason and time, and preached it to no body

body else, for they had regard to the Commandment of their Lord.

And it is to be observed, namely, that the first Sermon which they preached after the Ascension of Christ, it was preached to the very worst of these *Jerusalem-sinners*; even to those that were the murderers of *Jesus Christ*, *Acts 2. 23*. For these are part of the Sermon: *Ye took him, and by wicked hands have Crucified and slain him.* Yea, the next Sermon, and the next, and also the next to that, was preached to the self-same murderers, to the end they might be saved, *Acts 3. 14, 15, 16. chap. 4, 10, 11. chap. 5, 30. chap. 7. 52.*

But we will return to the first Sermon that was preached to these *Jerusalem-sinners*, by which will be manifest more than great Grace, if it be duly considered.

For after that *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles, had in their Exhortation persuaded these Wretches to believe that they had killed the Prince of Life, and after they had duly fallen under the guilt of their Murder, saying, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* He replies by an universal Tender to them all in general, considering them as *Christ-killers*. *That if they*

they were sorry for what they had done, and would be Baptized for the Remission of their sins in his Name, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts 2. 37, 38.

This he said to them all, though he knew that they were such sinners. Yea, he said it without the least stick, or stop, or pause of Spirit, as to whether he had best to say so or no. Nay, so far off was Peter from making an Objection against one of them, that by a particular Clause in his Exhortation, he endeavours, that not one of them may escape the Salvation offered. *Repent, saith he, and be Baptized every one of you.* I shut out never a one of you. For I am commanded by my Lord, to deal with you, as it were, one by one, by the Word of his Salvation. But why speaks he so particularly? Oh! there were reasons for it. The People with whom the Apostles were now to deal, as they were Murderers of our Lord, and to be charged in the general with his Blood, so they had their various and particular acts of Villany in the guilt thereof, now lying upon their Consciences. And the guilt of these their various and particular acts of wickedness, could not perhaps, be reached to a removal thereof, but by this particular

Appli-

Application. Repent every one of you ; be Baptized every one of you, in his Name, for the Remission of Sins, and you shall, every one of you, receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

Object. But I was one of them that plotted to take away his Life : May I be saved by him ?

Peter. Every one of you.

Object. But I was one of them that bare false Witness against him : Is there Grace for me ?

Peter. For every one of you.

Object. But I was one of them that cryed out, Crucifie, Crucifie him ; and that desired that Barabas the Murderer might live, rather than him. What will become of me, think you ?

Peter. I am to preach Repentance and Remission of Sins to every one of you, says Peter.

Object. But I was one of them that did spit in his face when he stood before his Accusers. I also was one that mocked him, when in anguish he hanged bleeding on the tree. Is there room for me ?

Peter. For every one of you, says Peter.

Object. But I was one of them that in his extremity said, Give him Gall and Vinegar

to drink, why may not I expect the same when anguish and guilt is upon me?

Peter. Repent of these your wickednesses, and here is remission of sins for every one of you.

Object. But I railed on him, I reviled him, I hated him, I rejoiced to see him mocked at by others. Can there be hopes for me?

Peter. There is for every one of you. Repent and be Baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost. Oh! what a blessed Every one of you, is here! How willing was Peter and the Lord Jesus, by his Ministry, to catch these Murderers with the Word of the Gospel, that they might be made Monuments of the Grace of God! How unwilling, I say, was he, that any of these should escape the hand of Mercy! Yea, what an amazing wonder is it, to think, that above all the World, and above every body in it, These should have the first offer of Mercy! Beginning at Jerusalem.

But was there not something of moment in this Clause of the Commission? Did not Peter, think you, see a great deal in it, that he should thus begin with

these

these men, and thus offer, so particularly, this Grace to each particular man of them?

But, as I told you, This is not all. These *Jerusalem-sinners* must have this offer again and again; *Every one of them*, must be offered it over and over. Christ would not take their first rejection for a denial; nor their second repulse for a denial: But he will have Grace offered once, and twice, and thrice, to these *Jerusalem-sinners*. Is not this amazing Grace! Christ will not be put off. These are the *Sinners*, that are sinners indeed. They are Sinners of the biggest sort, consequently such as Christ can, if they convert and be saved, best serve his ends and designs upon. Of which more anon.

But what a pitch of Grace is this! Christ is minded to amaze the World, and to shew that he acteth not like the Children of men. This is that which he said of old, *I will not execute the fierceness of my wrath, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not Man*, Hos. 11. 9. This is not the manner of Men; Men are shorter winded; Men are soon moved to take Vengeance, and to right themselves in a way of Wrath and Indignation.

nation. But God is full of Grace, full of Patience, ready to Forgive, and one that delights in Mercy. All this is seen in our Text. The biggest sinners must *First* be offered Mercy. They must, I say, have the Cream of the Gospel offered unto them.

But we will a little proceed. In the Third Chapter we find, that they who escaped Converting by the first Sermon, are called upon again, to accept of Grace and Forgiveness for their Murder committed upon this Son of God. You have killed; yea, you have denied the *Holy one and the Just*, and desired a *Murderer* to be granted unto you. And killed the *Prince of Life*. Mark, He falls again upon the very Men that actually were; as you have it in the Chapters following, his very *Betrayers and Murderers*, Acts 3. 14, 15. As being loth that they should escape the mercy of Forgiveness. And Exhorts them again to repent, that their sins might be blotted out, Ver. 19. 20.

Again, in the Fourth Chapter, he charges them afresh with this Murder, Ver. 10. But withall tells them, *Salvation is in no other*. Then like a heavenly *Decoy*, he puts himself also among them, to draw them the better under

the Net of the Gospel: saying, *There is none other Name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved, Ver. 12.*

In the fifth Chapter you find them railing at him, because he continued preaching among them Salvation in the Name of *Jesus*. But he tells them, That that very *Jesus* whom they had slain and hanged on a Tree, him God had raised up, and exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance to *Israel*, and Forgiveness of Sins, *Ver. 29. 30, 31.* Still insinuating, that tho' they had killed him, and to this day rejected him, yet his business was to bestow upon them, Repentance and Forgiveness of Sins.

'Tis true, after they began to kill again, and when nothing but killing would serve their turn; then they that were scattered abroad, went everywhere preaching the Word. Yet even some of them so hankered after the Conversion of the Jews, that they preached the Gospel only to them. Also the Apostles still made their abode at *Jerusalem*, in hopes that they might yet let down their Net for another draught of these *Jerusalem-sinners*. Neither did *Paul* and *Barnabas*, who were the Ministers of God to the

Gentiles, but offer the Gospel in the first place to those of them that for their wickedness were scattered like Vagabonds among the Nations. Yea, and when they rendred Rebellion and Blasphemy for their Service and Love ; they replied, *It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to them, Acts 1. 8. chap. 13. 46, 47.*

Nor was this their Preaching unsuccessful among these People: But the Lord Jesus so wrought with the Word thus spoken, that thousands of them came flocking to him for Mercy. Three thousand of them closed with him at the first ; and afterwards two thousand more ; for now they were in number about five thousand ; whereas before Sermons was preached to these Murderers, the number of the Disciples were not above a hundred and twenty, *Acts 1. 15, chap. 2. 41. chap. 4. 4.*

Also among these People that thus flocked to him for Mercy, there was a great company of the Priests, *chap. 6. 7.* Now the Priests were they that were the greatest of these biggest Sinners ; they were the Ringleaders, they were the Inventors and Ringleaders in the mischief. **T was they that set the People against the*

the Lord Jesus, and that was the cause why the uproar increased, until Pilate had given Sentence upon him. *The chief Priests and Elders, says the Text, perswaded (the People) the multitude, that they should ask Barabas, and destroy Jesus, Mat. 27. 20.* And yet behold, the Priests, yea, a great company of the Priests became obedient to the Faith.

Oh the Greatness of the Grace of Christ ! That he should be thus in love with the Souls of Jerusalem-sinners ! That he should be thus delighted with the Salvation of the Jerusalem-sinners ! That he should not only will that his Gospel should be offered them, but that it should be offered unto them first, and before other Sinners were admitted to a hearing of it ; *Begin at Jerusalem.*

Was this Doctrine well believed, where would there be place for a doubt, or a fear of the Damnation of the Soul, if the Sinner be penitent ; How bad a Life soever he has lived, how many soever in number are his sins !

But this Grace is hid from the Eyes of Men, the Devil hides it from them ; for he knows it is alluring ; he knows it has an attracting Virtue in it. For this is

is it, that above all Arguments can draw the Soul to God.

I cannot help it, but must let drop another Word: The first Church, the *Jerusalem*-Church, from whence the Gospel was to be sent into all the World; was a Church made up of *Jerusalem*-sinners. These great Sinners were here the most shining Monuments of the exceeding Grace of God.

Thus you see, I have proved the Doctrine; and that, not only by shewing you, that this was the practice of the Lord *Jesus Christ* in his Life-time; but his last Will, when he went up to God; saying, *Begin to preach at Jerusalem.*

Yea, it is yet further manifested, in that when his Ministers first began to preach there, he joyned his Power to the Word, to the Converting of thousands of his Betrayers and Murderers; and also many of the Ringleading Priests, to the Faith.

I shall now proceed, and shall shew you,

1. *The Reasons of the point.*
2. *And then make some Application of the whole.*

The Observation you know, is this, *Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners*, to the

Jerusalem-sinners; preach Repentance, and remission of sins, in my Name, among all Nations, Beginning at Jerusalem.

The Reasons of the Point are,

First, *Because the biggest Sinners have most need thereof.* He that has most need, Reason says, should be helped first. I mean, when a helping hand is offered, and now it is. For the Gospel of the Grace of God is sent to *help the World*, *Acts 16. 9.* But the biggest sinner has most need. Therefore in reason, when Mercy is sent down from Heaven to men, the worst of men shculd have the first offer of it. *Begin at Jerusalem.* This is the reason which the Lord Christ himself renders, why in his Life-time he left the best, and turned him to the worst; why he sat so loose from the Righteous, and stuck so close to the Wicked. *The whole*, saith he, *have no need of the Physician, but the sick.* *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,* *Mark 2. 15, 16,* 17.

Above, you read, that the Scribes and Pharisees said to his Disciples, *How is it that he eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?* Alas, they did not know the reason. But the Lord renders them one, and such an one as is both natural

tural and cogent ; Saying, *These have need, most need.* Their great necessity requires that I should be most friendly, and shew my grace first to them.

Not that the other were sinless, and so had no need of a Saviour : But the *Publi-cans* and their Companions, were the biggest sinners, they were, as to view, worse than the *Scribes*, and therefore in reason should be helped first, because they had most need of a Saviour.

Men that are at the point to dye, have more need of the Physician, than they that are but now and then troubled with an Heart-fainting-qualm. The *Publi-cans* and *Sinners* were as it were, in the mouth of Death, Death was swallowing of them down ; and therefore the Lord *Jesus* receives them first, offers them mercy first. *The whole have no need of the Physician, but the sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* The Sick, as I said, is the biggest sinner, whether he sees his Disease or not. He is stained from Head to Foot, from Heart to Life and Conversation. This man in every mans judgment, has the most need of mercy. There is nothing attends him from Bed to Board, and from Board to Bed again, but the visible characters,

and

and obvious symptoms of eternal damnation. This therefore is the man that has need, most need, and therefore in reason should be helped in the first place. Thus 'twas with the People concerned in the Text, they were *the worst of sinners, Jerusalem-sinners*, sinners of the biggest size, and therefore such as had the greatest need: Wherefore they must have mercy offered to them, before it be offered any where else in the World. *Begin at Jerusalem; offer mercy first to a Jerusalem-sinner:* This man has most need, he is farthest from God, nearest to Hell, and so one that has *most need*. This mans sins are in *number* the *most*, in *cry* the *loudest*, in *weight* the *heaviest*, and consequently will sink him soonest: Wherefore he has most need of mercy. This man is shut up in Satans hand, fastest bound in the cords of his sins: one that Justice is whetting his Sword to cut off, and therefore has most need, not only of mercy, but that it should be extended to him in the first place.

But a little further, to shew you the true nature of this Reason, to wit. *That Jesus Christ would have mercy offer'd in the first place to the biggest sinners.*

First, Mercy ariseth from Bowels and Compassion, from Pity, and from a feeling of the Condition of those in misery. *In his Love, and in his Pity, he sauerth us.* And again, *The Lord is pitiful, very pitiful, and of great mercy,* Isa. 63. 9. Jam. 5. 11.

Now where Pity and Compassion is, there is yearning of Bowels; and where there is that, there is a readiness to help. And, I say again, The more deplorable and dreadful the Condition is, the more directly doth Bowels and Compassion turn themselves to such, and offer help and deliverance. All this flows from our first Scripture proof, *I came to call them that have need; to call them first, while the rest look on, and murmur.*

How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? Ephraim was a Revolter from God, a man that had given himself up to Devilism: a company of men, the ten Tribes, that worshiped Devils, while Judah kept with his God. But *how shall I give thee up, Ephraim?* *How shall I deliver thee Israel?* *How shall I make thee as Admah?* *How shall I set thee as Zebboim?* (and yet thou art worse than they: nor has Samaria committed half-sins, Ezek. 16. 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51.) *My heart is turned within me, and my*

pentings are kindled together, Hos. 11. 8.

But where do you find that ever the Lord did thus rowl in his Bowels for, and after any Self-righteous man ? No, no, they are the Publicans and Harlots, Idolaters and *Jerusalem*-sinners, for whom his Bowels thus yearn and tumble about within him. For alas ! poor Worms, they have most need of mercy.

Had not the good *Samaritan* more compassion for that man that fell among Thieves, (though that fall was occasioned by his going from the place where they worshipped God , to *Jerico*, the cursed City) than we read he had for any other besides ? His *Wine* was for him, his *Oyl* was for him, his *Breast* for him ; his *Penny*, his *Care*, and his *Swadling-bands* for him ; for alas, Wretch ! he had most need, Luke 10. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

Zacharias the Publican, the *chief* of the Publicans , one that had made himself the richer by wronging of others ; the Lord at that time singlēth him out from all the rest of his brother Publicans , and that in the face of many Pharisees and proclaimed in the audience of them all, That that day *Salvation* was come to his house, Luke 19. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

The Woman also that had been bound down by Satan for eighteen years together, his compassions putting him upon it, he loosed her, though those that stood by snarled at him for so doing, *Luk. 13. 11, 12, 13.*

And why the Woman of *Sarepta*, and why *Nadaman the Syrian*, rather than Widows and Lepers in *Israel*; but because their conditions were more deplorable, (for that) they were most forlorn, and farthest from help, *Luk. 4. 25, 27.*

But I say, why all these, *thus* named? why have we not a Catalogue of some Holy men that were so in their own eyes, and in the judgment of the World? Alas! if at any time any of them are mentioned, how seemingly coldly doth the Record of Scripture present them to us? *Nicodemus*, a Night-Professor, and *Simon the Pharisee*, with his Fifty Pence; and their great ignorance of the methods of Grace, we have now and then touched upon.

Mercy seems to be out of his proper Channel, when it deals with Self-righteous' men; but then it runs with a full stream when it extends it self to the biggest sinners. As God's mercy is not regulated by Man's goodness, nor obtain-

ed by Man's worthiness; so not much set out by saving of any such. But more of this anon.

And here let me ask my *Reader* a Question: Suppose that as thou art walking by some Pond-side, thou shouldst espy in it, four or five Children all in danger of drowning, and one in more danger than all the rest; judge which has most need to be helped out first? I know thou wilt say, he that is nearest drowning. Why, this is the case; the bigger Sinner, the nearer drowning; therefore the bigger sinner, the more need of mercy; yea, of help by mercy in the first place. And to this our Text agrees, when it saith, *Beginning at Jerusalem*. Let the *Jerusalem Sinner*, says Christ, have the first offer, the first invitation, the first tender of my grace and mercy, for he is the biggest sinner, and so has most need thereof.

Secondly, Christ Jesus would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners, because when they, any of them, receive it, it redounds most to the fame of his Name.

Christ Jesus, as you may perceive, has put himself under the term of a Physician, a Doctor for curing of Diseases;

And you know that Applause, and a Fame, is a thing that Physicians much desire. That is it that helps them to Patients, and that also that will help their Patients to commit themselves to their Skill for Cure, with the more confidence and repose of Spirit. And the best way for a Doctor or Physician to get themselves a Name, is in the first place to take in hand, and Cure some such as all others have given over for lost and dead. Physicians get neither Name nor Fame by pricking of Wheals or picking out Thistles, or by laying of Plasters to the scratch of a Pen. Every old Woman can do this. But if they will have a Name and a Fame, if they will have it quickly, they must, as I said, do some great and desperate Cures. Let them fetch one to Life that was Dead; let them recover one to his Wits, that was Mad; let them make one that was born Blind, to See; or let them give ripe Wits to a Fool; these are notable Cures; and he that can do thus, and if he doth thus first, he shall have the Name and Fame he desires; he may lie a Bed till Noon.

Why, Christ Jesus forgiveth sins for a Name, and so getteth of himself a good Report in the hearts of the Children of men.

men. And therefore in reason, he must be willing, as also he did command, that his mercy should be offered first to the biggest Sinners.

I will forgive their sins, iniquities, and transgressions, says he, and it shall turn to me for a name of Joy, and a praise, and an honour, before all the Nations of the earth, Jer. 33. 8, 9.

And hence it is that at his first appearing he took upon him to do such mighty works. He got a Fame thereby; he got a Name thereby, *Mat. 4. 23, 24.*

When Christ had cast the legion of Devils out of the man of whom you read, *Mark 5.* He bid him go home to his Friends and tell it. *Go home, saith he, to thy friends, and tell them how great things God has done for thee, and has had compassion on thee,* *Mark 5. 19.* Christ Jesus seeks a Name, and desireth a Fame in the World; and therefore, or the better to obtain that, he commands that mercy should first be proffered to the biggest sinners, because by the saving of one of them, he makes all men marvel. As 'tis said of the man last mentioned, whom Christ cured toward the beginning of his Ministry: *And he departed, says the Text, and began to publish in Decapolis,*

polis, how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel, Ver. 20.

When John told Christ, that they saw one casting out Devils in his Name, and they forbad him because he followed not with them : What is the answer of Christ? *Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my Name, that can lightly speak evil of me.* No, they will rather cause his Praise to be heard, and his Name to be magnified, and so put Glory on the head of Christ.

But we will follow a little our Metaphor : Christ, as I said, has put himself under the term of a Physician ; Consequently he desireth that his Fame, as to the Salvation of sinners, may spread abroad, that the World may see what he can do. And to this end, has not only commanded that the biggest sinners should have the first offer of his mercy ; but has, as Physicians do, put out his Bills, and published his doings, that things may be read and talked of. Yea, he has moreover in these his blessed Bills, the Holy Scriptures, I mean, incerted the very Names of Persons, the places of their abode, and the great Cures that by the means of his Salvations he has wrought upon them to this very end.

Here

Here is, *Item*, Such a one by my grace and redeeming Blood, was made a Monument of everlasting Life : And such a one by my perfect Obedience, became an Heir of Glory. And then he produceth their Names.

Item, I saved *Lot* from the guilt and damnation that he had procured to himself by his *incest*.

Item, I saved *David* from the Vengeance that belonged to him for committing of Adultery and Murder.

Here is also *Solomon*, *Manasseh*, *Peter*, *Magdalen*, and many others made mention of in this Book. Yea, here are their Names, their Sins, and their Salvations recorded together, that you may read, and know what a Saviour he is, and do him honour in the World. For why are these things thus recorded, but to shew to Sinners what he can do, to the praise and glory of his grace ?

And it is observable, as I said before, we have but very little of the Salvation of little sinners mentioned in God's Book, because that would not have answered the design, to wit, to bring glory and fame to the Name of the Son of God.

What should be the reason, think you, why *Christ* should so easily take a denial

of the great ones, that *wear* the Grandure of the World, and struggle so hard for Hedge creepers and Highway men, (as that Parable, *Luke 14.* seems to import he doth) but to shew forth the riches of the glory of his Grace to his praise. This, I say, is one Reason to be sure.

They that had their Grounds, their *yoke* of Oxen, and their marriage Joys, were invited to come; but they made their excuse, and that served the turn. But when he comes to deal with the worst, he saith to his Servants, Go out and bring them in higher. Go out quickly and bring in bither the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. And they did so. And he said again, Go out into the high ways, and Hedges, and Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled, *Luk. 14. 18, 19. 23.* These poor, lame, maimed, blind, hedge-creepers, and high way men, *Must* come in, *Must* be forced in. These, if saved, will make his Merits shine.

When Christ was crucified, and hanged up between the Earth and Heavens, there was two Thieves crucified with him; and, behold, he lays hold of one of them, and will have him away with him.

him to Glory. Was not this a strange act, and a display of unthought-of grace? Were there none but Thieves there, or were the rest of that company out of his reach? Could he not, think you, have stooped from the Cross to the Ground, and have laid hold on some honester man if he would? Yes, doubtless. O, but then he would not have displayed his Grace, nor so have pursued his own designs; namely, to get to himself a praise and a name; But now he has done it to purpose. For who that shall read this Story, but must confess that the Son of God is full of grace; for a proof of the riches thereof, he left behind him, when upon the Cross, he took the Thief away with him to glory. Nor can this one act of his be buried: It will be talked of to the end of the World to his praise. Men shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts; and will declare thy greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness. They shall speak of the glory of thy Kingdom, and talk of thy power. To make known to the Sons of men, his mighty acts, and the glorious Majesty of his Kingdom. Psal. 145. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

When the Word of God came among

the Conjurers and those Sooth-sayers, that you read of *Act. 19.* and had prevailed with some of them to accept of the grace of *Christ*, the Holy Ghost records it with a *boast*, for that it would redound to his praise ; saying,

And many of them that used curious Arts, brought their Books together and burned them before all men, and counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of Silver. So mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed, Acts 19. 19, 20. It wrenched out of the clutches of *Satan*, some of those of whom he thought himself most sure. *So mightily grew the Word of God.* It grew mightily, it encroached upon the Kingdom of the Devil ! It pursued him, and took the prey : It forced him to let go his hold ! It brought away captive, as Prisoners taken by force of Arms, some of the most valiant of his Army. It fetcht back from, as it were, the confines of Hell, some of those that were his most trusty, and that with Hell had been at an agreement. It made them come and confess their deeds, and burn their Books before all men : *So mightily grew the Word of God, and prevailed.*

Thus

Thus therefore you see why Christ will have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners. They have most need thereof; and this is the most ready way to extol his name that rideth upon the Heavens to our help. But,

Thirdly, Christ Jesus would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, Because by their Forgiveness and Salvation, others, hearing of it, will be encouraged the more to come to him for Life.

For the Physician by curing of the most desperate at the first, doth not only get himself a Name, but begets Encouragement in the minds of other diseased folk to come to him for help. Hence you read of our Lord, that after, through his tender mercy, he had Cured many of great Diseases, his Fame was spread abroad: They brought unto him all sick People that were taken with divers Diseases and Torments, and those which were possessed with Devils, and those which were Lunatick and those that had the Palsie, and he healed them; and there followed him great multitudes of People from Galilee, and Decapolis, and Jerusalem, and Judea, and from beyond Jordan, Mat. 4. 24, 25.

See here, He first by working, gets himself a Fame, a Name, and Renown, and

and now men take Encouragement, and bring from all quarters their Diseased to him, being helped by what they had heard, to believe that their Diseased should be healed.

Now, as he did with those outward Cures, so he does in the proffers of his Grace and Mercy ; he proffers *that* in the first place to the biggest Sinners, that others may take Heart to come to him to be saved. I will give you a Scripture or two, I mean, to shew you that Christ by commanding that his Mercy should in the first place be offered to the biggest of Sinners, has a design, thereby to encourage and provoke others to come also to him for Mercy.

God, saith Paul, who is rich in Mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in our sins hath quickened us together with Christ. (by Grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus. But why did he do all this ? That in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his kindness towards us thorow Christ Jesus, Ephel. 2. 4. 5. 6. 7.

See, here's a design, God lets out his Mercy to *Ephesus* of design, even to shew

to the Ages to come, the exceeding Riches of his Grace in his kindness to them thorow Christ Jesus. And why to shew by these, the exceeding Riches of his Grace to the Ages to come thorow Christ Jesus? But to allure them, and their Children also to come to him, and to partake of the same Grace thorow Christ Jesus.

But what was *Paul*, and the *Ephesian-Sinners*? (of *Paul* we will speak ancn) These *Ephesian-Sinners*, They were men dead in Sins, men that walked according to the dictates and motions of the Devil, worshippers of *Diana*, that Effeminate Goddess : Men far off from God, aliens and strangers to all good things, such as were far off from that, as I said, and consequently in a most deplorable condition. As the *Jerusalem-Sinners* were of the highest sort among the Jews, so these *Ephesian-Sinners* were of the highest sort among the Gentiles, (*Ephes.* 2. 1, 2, 3. *Acts* 19. 35. *Ephes.* 2. 11, 12.)

Wherfore as by the *Jerusalem-Sinners* in saving them first, he had a design to provoke others to come to him for Mercy ; so, The same design is here set on foot again, in his calling and converting the *Ephesian-Sinners*; that in the Ages to come he might shew the exceeding Riches

Riches of his Grace, says he, *in his kindness towards us thorow Christ Jesus*. There is yet one hint behind. 'Tis said that God saved these F O R *his love*. That is, as I think, for the setting forth, for the commendations of his love, for the advance of his love in the Hearts and minds of them that should come after. As who should say, God has had Mercy upon, and been Gracious *to* you, that he might shew to others for their encouragement, that they have ground to come to him to be saved. *When God saves one great Sinner, 'tis to encourage another great Sinner to come to him for Mercy.*

He saved the *Thief*, to encourage *Thieves* to come to him for Mercy. He saved *Magdalen*, to encourage other *Magdalens* to come to him for Mercy. He saved *Saul*, to encourage *Sauls* to come to him for Mercy. And this *Paul* himself doth say, *For this cause*, saith he, *I obtained Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long suffering for a Pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*, 1 Tim. 1. 16.

How plain are the words! Christ in saving of me, has given to the World a Pattern of his Grace, that they might see, and believe, and come, and be saved.

That

That they that are to be born hereafter, might believe on Jesus Christ to life everlasting.

But what was *Paul*? Why he tells you himself, *I am*, says he, *the chief of Sinners*; *I was*, says he, *a Blasphemer, a Persecutor, an injurious Person*: but *I obtained Mercy*, 1 Tim. 1. 14, 15. Ay, that's well for you *Paul*; but what advantage have we thereby? Oh very much, saith he; *For, for this cause I obtained Mercy*, that in me *First*, Jesus Christ might shew all long suffering for a pattern to them which shall believe on him to life everlasting.

Thus therefore you see that this third Reason is of strength, namely, That Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, because, by their *Forgiveness and Salvation*, others, hearing of it, will be encouraged the more to come to him for *Mercy*.

It may well therefore be said to God, *Thou delightest in Mercy, and Mercy pleases thee*, Mich. 7. 18.

But who believes that this was Gods design in shewing Mercy of old? Namely, That we that come after might take courage to come to him for Mercy; or that Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, to stir

stir up others to come to him; for Life. This is not the manner of men! O God!

But *David* saw this betimes, therefore he makes this one Argument with God, That he would blot out his Transgressions, that he would forgive his Adultery, his Murders, and horrible Hypocrisie. *Da-
ii, O Lira,* saith he, do it, And then will I teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be Converted unto thee, *Psal. 51.7,8,
9, 10, 11, 12, 13.*

He knew that the Conversion of Sinners would be a work highly pleasing to God, as being that which he had designed before he made Mountain or Hill: Wherefore he comes, and he saith, Save me, O Lord; if thou wilt but save me, I will fall in with thy design. I will help to bring what Sinners to thee I can. And Lord, I am willing to be made a Preacher my self, for that I have been a horrible Sinner; wherefore, if thou shalt forgive my great Transgressions, I shall be a fit man to tell of thy wonderous Grace to others. Yea, Lord, I dare promise, that if thou wilt have mercy upon me, it shall tend to the glory of thy Grace, and also to the increase of thy Kingdom; for I will tell it, and Sinners will hear on't. And there is nothing so suitheth with the hear-

hearing Sinner, as Mercy: and to be inform'd that God is willing to bestow it upon him. *I will teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be Converted unto thee.*

Nor will Christ Jesus miss of his design in profering of Mercy in the first place to the biggest Sinners. You know what work the Lord, by laying hold of the Woman of *Samaria*, made among the People there. They knew that she was a *Town-Sinner*, an *Adulteress*. Yea, one that after the most audacious manner, lived in Uncleanness with a man that was not her Husband. But when she, from a turn upon her Heart, went into the City, and said to her Neighbours, *Come: Oh how they canie! how they flocked out of the City to Jesus Christ!* *Then they went out of the City, and came to him, and many of the Samaritans* (People perhaps as bad as herself) *believed on him, for the saying of the woman, which testified, saying, He told me all that ever I did* (John 4. 39.)

That word, *He told me all that ever I did*, was a great Argument with them; for by that they gathered, That tho' he knew her to be vile, yet he did not despise her, nor refuse to shew how willing he was to communicate his Grace unto her:

her: And this fetched over, first, her
then them.

This woman, as I said, was a *Samaritan-Sinner*, a Sinner of the worst Complexion. For the Jews abhorred to have ought to do with them (ver. 9.) wherefore none more fit than she to be made one of the *Decoys of Heaven*, to bring others of these *Samaritan Wild-Fowls* under the Net of the Grace of Christ: And she did the work to purpose. Many, and many more of the *Samaritans* believed on him, Verse 40, 41, 42. The Heart of man, tho set on Sin, will, when it comes once to a perswasion that God is willing to have Mercy upon us, incline to come to Jesus Christ for life; witness those turn-a-ways from God, that you also read of in *Jeremiah*; for after they had heard three or four times over, that God had Mercy for backsliders, they broke out and said, *Bebold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God.* Or as those in *Hosea* did, *For in thee the Fatherless find mercy.* (Jer. 3. 22. Hos. 14. 1, 2, 3.)

Mercy, and the revelation thereof, is the only Antidote against Sin. 'Tis of a thawing nature: 'twill loose the Heart that is frozen up in Sin: yea, 'twill make the Unwilling willing to come to Jesus Christ for Life.

Where-

Wherefore do you think was it that Jesus Christ told the Adulterous woman, and that before so many Sinners, *that he had not Condemned her*, but to allure her, with them there present, to hope to find favour at his hands. (As he also saith in another place, *I came not to Judge, but to Save the World*) for might they not thence most rationally conclude, That if Jesus Christ had rather save, than damn an Harlot, there was encouragement for them to come to him for Mercy.

I heard once a story from a Souldier, who with his Company had laid Siege against a Fort, that so long as the Besieged were perswaded their Foes would show them no favour, they Fought like Madmen ; but when they saw one of their Fellows taken, and received no favour, they all came tumbling down from their Fortress, and delivered themselves into their Enemies hands,

I am perswaded, did men believe that there is that Grace and Willingness in the Heart of Christ to save Sinners, as the Word imports there is, they would come tumbling into his Arms : But Satan has blinded their Minds, that they cannot see this thing. Howbeit the Lord Jesus has, as I said, that others might take Heart

and come to him, given out a commandment that Mercy should in the first place be offered to the biggest Sinners. *Begin, saith he, at Jerusalem.* And thus I end the third Reason.

Fourthly, Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, Because that is the way, if they receive it, most to weaken the Kingdom of Satan, and to keep it lowest in every Age of the World. The biggest Sinners, they are Satans *Colonels*, and *Captains*, the Leaders of his People, and they that most stoutly make Head against the Son of God. Wherefore let these *first* be conquered, and his Kingdom will be weak. When *Ishbosheth* had lost his *Abner*, his Kingdom was made weak, nor did he sit but *tottering then* upon his Throne. So when Satan loseth his strong men, them that are mighty to work Iniquity, and *dextrous* to manage others in the same, then is his Kingdom weak (*2 Sam. 3.*) Therefore I say, Christ doth offer Mercy in the first place to such, the more to weaken his Kingdom. Christ Jesus was glad to see Satan fall like Lightning from Heaven, that is suddenly or headlong; and it was, surely, by casting of him out of strong Possessions, and by recovering

of some notorious Sinners out of his Clutches, (*Luke 10. 17, 18, 19.*)

Samson, when he would pull down the Philistines Temple, took hold of the two main Pillars of it, and breaking them, down came the House. Christ came to destroy the works of the Devil, and to destroy by converting Grace, as well as by redeeming Blood. Now Sin swarms and lieth by Legions, and whole Armies, in the Souls of the biggest Sinners, as in Garrisons: Wherefore the way, the most direct way to destroy it, is first to deal with such Sinners, by the Word of his Gospel, and by the Merits of his Passion.

For Example, tho I shall give you but a homely one; Suppose a Family to be very Lowzy, and one or two of the Family to be *in chief* the breeders; the way, the quickest way, to clear that Family, or at least to weaken the so swarming of those Vermine, is, in the *first place* to sweeten the Skin, Head, and Cloaths of the *chief breeders*: And then, though all the Family should be apt to breed them, the number of them, and so the greatness of that Plague there, will be the more impaired.

Why, there are some people that are in chief the Devils *Sin-Breeders* in the Towns and Places where they live. The Place, Town, or Family where they live, must needs be horrible lowrie, and as it were, eaten up with *Vermin*: Now let the Lord *Jesus* in the first place cleanse these great Breeders, and there will be given a nip to those swarms of Sins that use to be committed in such places throughout the Town, House, or Family where such *sin-breeding* Persons used to be.

I speak by Experience; I was one of these lowzy ones, one of these great *sin-breeders*; I infected all the Youth of the Town where I was born, with all manner of youthful Vanities. The neighbours counted me so, my practise proved me so: Wherefore *Christ Jesus* took me first; and taking me first, the Contagion was much allayed all the Town over. When God made me sigh, they would harken, and enquiringly say, *What's the matter with John?* They also gave their various opinions of me: But as I said, *Sin-cooled*, and failed, as to his full career. When I went out to seek the Bread of Life, some of them would follow, and the rest be put into a mule at home. Yea, almost the Town, at first,

at times, would go out to hear at the place where I found good: Yea, young and old for a while had some reformation on them; also some of them perceiving that God had mercy upon me, came crying to him for mercy too.

But what need I give you an Instance of poor I; I will come to *Manasseh* the King: So long as he was a ringleading Sinner, the great Idolater, and chief for Devilism, the whole Land flowed with wickedness; *For he made them to sin*, and do worse than the Heathen that dwelt round about them, or that was cast out from before them. But when God converted him, the whole Land was reformed. Down went the Groves, the Idols, and Altars of *Baal*, and up went true Religion in much of the Power and Purity of it. You'll say, The King reformed by Power. I answer, doubtless, and by Example too; for People observe their Leaders; as their Fathers did, so did they, *2 Chron. 33. 2 King. 17. 41.*

This therefore is another Reason, why Jesus would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners, because that is the best way, if they receive it, most to weaken the kingdom of Satan, and to keep it poor and low.

And do you not think now, that if God would but take hold of the hearts of some of the most notorious in your Town, in your Family, or Countrey; that this thing would be verified before your faces? It would, it would, to the Joy of you that are godly, to the making of Hell to sigh, to the great suppressing of Sin, the glory of Christ, and the joy of the Angels of God. And Ministers should therefore, that this Work might go on, take advantages to persuade with the biggest Sinners to come into Christ, according to my Text, and their Commissions: Beginning at Jerusalem.

Fifthly, Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners. Because such, when converted, are usually the best helps in the Church against temptations, and fittest for the support of the feeble minded there. Hence, usually, you have some such in the first plantation of Churches; or quickly upon it. Churches would do but sorrowly, if Christ Jesus did not put such Converts among them; they are the Monuments and Mirrors of Mercy. The very sight of such a Sinner in God's House, yea, the very thought of him, where the sight of him cannot

cannot be had, is oft-times greatly for
the help of the Faith of the feeble in such

Whereas the Churches (said Paul) that
were in Judea, heard this concerning me, that
the Jewish persecuted them in time past, now
throughout the Jewish which once he destroyed,
they glorified God in this Gal. 1.20, 24, 22,

23d 24. 10. 15. W. continuing side 35 and
||Glorified God.] How is that? Why,
they praised him; and took courage to
believē the more in the mercy of God:
For that he had had mercy on such a
great sinner as he. They glorified God
[in me.] They wondred that Grace should
be so richly as to take hold of such a
Wretch as I was; and for my sake be-
lieved in Christ the more.

There are two things that great sinners are acquainted with, when they come to divulge them to the Saints, that are a great affliction to their Faith. *John T.*

The Contests that they usually have
with the Devil at their parting with
him.

ask Their knowledge of his Secrets in
his workings. 911 to 1000 10 12 21 22

For the First, The biggest sinnes have
great contests with the Devil and
their partings ; and this is an help to
them. For ordinary Saints find often

wards what the vile ones find at first; but when at the opening of hearts the one finds himself to be as the other, the one is a comfort to the other. The lesser sort of sinners find but little of this, till after they have been sometime in profession; but the Vile Man meets with his at the beginning. Wherefore he, when the other is down, is ready to tell that he has met with the same before. For I say, he has had it before. Satan is loth to part with a great Sinner. What, my true Servant (quoth he) my old Servant, wilt thou forsake me now? Having so often sold thy self to me to work wickedness, wilt thou forsake me now? Thou horrible Wretch, dost not know, that thou hast sinned thy self beyond the reach of Grace, and dost think to find Mercy now? Art not thou a Murderer, a Thief, a Harlot, a Witch, a sinner of the greatest size, and dost thou look for mercy now? Dost thou think that Christ will foul his fingers with thee?

“Tis enough to make Angels blush saith Satan, to see so vile a one knock at Heaven gates for Mercy, and wilt thou be so abominable bold to do it? Thus Satan dealt with me, says the great Sinner when at first I came to Jesus Christ.

what did you reply, saith the Tempted? Why, I granted the whole Charge to be true, says the other. And what, did you despair? or how? No (saith he) I said, I am *Magdalene*, I am *Zacheus*, I am the *Thief*, I am the *Harlot*, I am the *Publican*, I am the *Prodigal*, and one of *Christ's* Murderers : Yea, worse than any of these, and yet God was so far off from rejecting of me (as I found afterwards) that there was musick and dancing in his House for me, and for Joy that I was come home unto him. *Oh blessed be God for Grace*, (says the other) for then I hope there is favour for me. Yea, as I told you, such alone is a continual Spectacle in the Church, for every one by, to behold God's grace, and wonder !

Secondly, And as for the Secrets of Satan, such as are Suggestions to question the Being of God, the truth of his Word, and to be annoyed with devilish Blasphemies : None more acquainted with these than the biggest sinners at their Conversion ; wherefore thus also they are prepared to be helps in the Church to relieve and comfort the other.

I might also here tell you of the Contests and Battles that such are engaged in, wherein they find the buffettings of

Satan, above any other the Saints: At which times Satan assaults the Soul with darkness, fears, frightful thoughts of Apparitions; now they sweat, pant, cry out, and struggle for life.

The Angels now come down to behold the fight, and rejoice to see a bit of Dust and Ashes to overcome Principalities and Powers, and Might, and Dominions. But, as I said, when these come a little to be settled, they are prepared for help for others, and are great Comforts unto them. Their great sins given encouragement to the Devil to assault them, and by these temptations Christ takes advantage to make them the more helpful to the Churches.

The biggest sinner, when he is converted and comes into the Church, says to them all, by his very coming in, Behold me, all you that are gathered together, a low and simorous spirit, such whose hearts are narrow, for that you understand the advantage to know, because your sins are few, the largeness of the grace of God. Behold, I say, in me, the exceeding greatness of his grace to him that forfeited me, forbidding your faces, in which your pity took me back to me. This, I say, the greatest sinner can say, and the exceeding comfort of the rest.

Wherefore, as I have hinted before, when God intends to stock a place with Saints, and to make that place excellently to flourish with the riches of his grace; he usually begins with the Conversion of some of the most notorious there abouts, and lays them as an Example to allure others, and to build up when they are converted.

It was Paul that must go to the Galatians, because Paul was the most outrageous of all the Apostles, in the time of his unregeneracy: Yea, Peter must be he that after his horrible fall, was thought fittest, when recovered again, to comfort and strengthen his Brethren. See Luke 22. 31, 32.

Some must be Pillars in God's House, and if they be Pillars of Cedar, they must stand while they are stout and sturdy sticks in the Forrest, before they are cut down, and planted or placed there.

No man, when he buildeth his House, makes the principal parts thereof, of weak or feeble Timber; for how could such bear up the rest; but of great and able Wood. Christ Jesus also goeth this way to work, he makes of the biggest Sinners, Bearers and Supporters to

the rest. This then may serve for another Reason, why Jesus Christ gives out in Commandment, that Mercy should in the first place be offered to the biggest Sinners, Because such when converted, are usually the best helps in the Church against temptations, and fittest for the support of the feeble-minded there.

Sixtly, Another reason, why Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, is, Because They, when converted, are apt to love him most.

This agrees both with Scripture, and Reason. Scripture says so. *To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much. To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little;* Luk. 7. 47. Reason says so. For as it would be the unreasonableness thing in the world, to render hatred for love, and contempt for forgiveness; so 'twould be as ridiculous to think that the reception of a little kindness should lay the same obligations upon the heart to love, as the reception of a great deal. I would not disparage the love of Christ; I know the least dram of it, when it reaches to forgiveness, is great above all the world; But comparatively, there is greater extenions of the love of Christ.

to one, than to another: He that has most sin, if forgiven, is partaker of the greatest love, of the greatest forgiveness, & so it is said; *John xv. 24.*

I know also, that there are some, that from this very Doctrine, say, *Let us do evil, that good may come;* and that turn the Grace of our God into Lechivousness. But I speak not of these. These will neither be ruled by Grace nor Reason. Grace would teach them, if they knew it, to deny Wickedly Courses; and so would Reason too, if it could truly sense the Love of God. *Tim. 2. 11, 12. Rom. 11. 1.*

Doth it look like what hath any Coherence with Reason or Mercy, for a man to abuse his Friend? Because Christ died for men, shall I therefore spit in his Face? The Bread and Water that was given by *Elisha* to his Enemies, that came into the Land of *Israel* to take him, had so much influence upon their Minds, tho' *Heathens*, that they returned to their homes without hurting him: Yea, it kepe them from coming again in a hostile manner into the Coasts of *Israel*; *2 Kings 6. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.*

But to forbear to illustrate till anon; One reason why Christ Jesus shews Mercy to Sinners, is that he might obtain their

Love, that he may remove their base affections, from base objects, to himself. Now if he loves to be loved a little, he loves to be loved much; but there is not any that are capable of loving much, save those that have much forgiven them. Hence 'tis said of *Paul*, That he laboured more than them all, to wit, with a labour of love, because he had been by sin more vile against Christ than they all, *1 Cor. 15.* He it was that persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it, *Gal. 1. 13.* He, of them all, was the only raving Bedlam against the Saints: And being exceeding mad, says he, against them, I persecuted them even to strange Cities, *Acts 26. 11.* *1 Cor. 15.*

This raving Bedlam, that once was so, is he that now says, I laboured more than them all, more for Christ than them all.

But *Paul*, what moved thee then to do? The love of Christ, says he. It was not I, but the grace of God that was with me. *Who* who should say; O Grace! Twas such Grace to save me! Twas such marvelous Grace for God to look down from Heaven upon me, and that secured me from the wrath to come, that I am captivated with the sense of the riches of it. Hence I act, hence I live.

hour; For how can I otherwise do, since God not only separated me from my Sins and Companions, but separated all the power of my Soul and Body to his Service? I am therefore prompted on by this exceeding love, to labour as I have done; yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

Oh! I shall never forget his love, nor the circumstances under which I was, when his love laid hold upon me. I was going to *Damascus* with Letters from the High Priest to make Havock of God's People there, as I had made Havock of them in other places. These bloody Letters was not imposed upon me. I went to the High Priest and desired them of him; *Act. 9. 1, 2.* And yet he saved me! I was one of the men, of the chief men that had a hand in the Blood of his Martyr *Stephen*, yet he had mercy on me! When I was at *Damascus*, I stunk so horribly like a Blood-sucker, that I became a Terror to all thereabout. Yea, *Ananias* (good man) made intercession to my Lord against me, yet he would have mercy upon me! Yea, joyned mercy to mercy, until he had made me a monument of Grace. *He made a Saint of me*, and persuaded me, that my transgressions were forgiven me. *John 10. 31.*

When I began to preach, those that heard me were amazed; and said, Is not this he that destroyed them that called on this Name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound to the High Priest? Hell doth know that I was a Sinner; Heaven doth know that I was a Sinner: The World also knows that I was a Sinner, a Sinner of the greatest size; but I obtained mercy, *Acts 9, 20, 21.*

Shall not this lay Obligation upon me? Is not Love of the greatest force to oblige? Is it not strong as Death? Crucifix the Grave? and hotter than the Coals of Juniper? Hath it not a most vehement flame? Can the Waters quench it? Can the Floods drown it? I am under the force of it, and this is my continual cry, What shall I render to the Lord for all the Benefits which he has bestowed upon me?

Av! Paul, this is something, thou speakes like a Man, like a man affected, and carried away with the love and grace of God. Now this sense, and this affection, and this labour, giveth to Christ the love that he looks for. But he might have converted twenty little sinners, and was not found, for grace bestowed, so much love in them all.

I wonder how far a man might go among the Converted Sinners of the smaller size, before one could find one that so much as look any thing this way-ward. Where is he that is thus under spangs of love for the Grace bestowed upon him by *Jesus Christ*? Excepting only some few; you may walk to the Worlds end and find none. But, as I say, some there are, and so there has been in every age of the Church, great sinners, that have had much forgiven them. And they love much upon this ac-
count.

Jesus Christ therefore knows what he doth, when he lays hold on the hearts of sinners of the biggest size. He knows that such an one will love more than many that have not sinned half their sins.

I will tell you a Story that I have read of *Martha* and *Mary*, the Name of the Book I have forgot. I mean of the Book in which I found the Relation; but the thing was thus: *Martha*, saith my Author, was a very holy Woman, much like *Lazarus*; her Brother; but *Mary* was a loose and wan-ton creature. *Martha* did seldom miss good Sermons, and lectures, when she could come at them in *Jerusalem*; but

Mary

Mary would frequent the house of Sports, and the company of the vilest of Men for lust. And though Martha had often desired that her Sister would go with her to hear her Preachers: Yea, had often entreated her with Tears, to do it, yet could she never prevail; for still Mary would make her excuse, or reject her with disdain; for her Zeal and Preciseness in Religion.

After Martha had waited long, tried many ways to bring her Sister to good, and all proved ineffectual: At last, she comes upon her thus. Sister, quoth she, I pray thee go with me to the Temple to day, to hear one preach a Sermon. What kind of Preacher is he, said she? Martha replied, It is one Jesus of Nazareth, he is the handsomest man that ever you saw with your eyes. Oh! he shines in Beauty, and is a most excellent Preacher.

Now what does Mary? After a little pause, but goes up into her Chamber, and with her Pins and her Clouts, decks up her self as fine as her fingers could make her. This done, away she goes, not with her Sister Martha, but as much unobserved as she could, to the Sermon, or rather to See the Preacher.

The Hour and Preacher being come, and she having observed whereabout the Preacher would stand, goes and lets her self so in the Temple, that she might be sure to have the full view of this excellent Person. So he comes in, and she looks, and the first glimds of his Person preache her. Well, Jesus addresseth himself to his Sermon, and she looks earnestly on him.

Now at that time, saith my Author, Jesus Preached about the Joy of the Lost Sheep, and the prodigal Child. And when he came to shew what care the Shepherd took for one lost Sheep, and how the Woman wept to find her Piece which was lost, and what Joy there was at their finding; she began to be taken by the Ear, and forgot what she came about, musing what the Preacher would make on't: But when he came to the Application, and shewed that by the lost Sheep was meant a great Sinner, by the Shepherds care was meant God's love for great Sinners; and that by the Joy of the Neighbours, was shewed what Joy there was among the Angels in Heaven, over one great Sinner that repented; She began to be taken by the Heart. And as he spake these last words, she thought

he pitched his innocent Eyes just upon her, and looked as if he spake what was now said, to her. Wherefore her heart began to tremble, being shaken with affection and fear; then her Eyes run down with tears apace; wherefore she was forced to hide her face with her Handkerchief, and so sat sobbing and crying all the rest of the Sermon.

Sermon being done, up she gets, and away she goes, and withal enquired where this *Jesus* the Preacher dined that day? And one told her, at the house of *Simon the Pharisee*. So away goes she, first to her Chamber, and there strips herself of her wanton Attire; then falls upon her knees to ask God for giveness for all her wicked life. This done, in a modest dress she goes to *Simon's* house, where she finds *Jesus* set at Dinner, so she gets behind him, and weeps, and drops her tears upon his Feet like Rain, and washes them, and wipes them with the Hairs of her Head. She also kissed his Feet with her Lips, and anointed them with Oyntment. When *Simon the Pharisee* perceived what the Woman did, and being ignorant of what it was to be forgiven much (for he never was for given more than fifty Pence) He be-

gan to think within himself, that he had been mistaken about *Jesus Christ*, because he suffered such a Sinner as this Woman was, to touch him. Surely, quoth he, this Man, if he were a Prophet, would not let this Woman come near him, for she is a Town Sinner, (so ignorant are all Self-righteous men of the way of *Christ* with Sinners). But lest *Mary* should be discouraged with some clownish carriage of this *Pharisee*, and so desert her good beginnings, and her new steps which she now had began to take towards eternal Life, *Jesus* began thus with *Simon*. *Simon*, saith he, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, seye. There was, said *Jesus*, a certain *Creditor* had two *Debtors*, the one owed him Five hundred *Pence*, and the other, Fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore which of them will love him most? *Simon* answered and said, I suppose he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the Woman, and said unto *Simon*, Seest thou this Woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest me no Water for my Feet: but she hath washed my Feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Then

Thou gavest me no kiss, but this Woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my Feet. My Head with Oyl thou didst not anoint, but this Woman hath anointed my Feet with Oyntment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her Sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, thy Sins are forgiven, Luk. 7: 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50.

Thus you have the Story. If I come short in any Circumstance, I beg Pardon of those that can correct me. 'Tis three (or four) and twenty Years since I saw the Book; yet I have as far as my memory will admit, given you the relation of the Matter. However, Links, as you see, doth here present you with the Substance of the whole.

Alas! Christ Jesus has but little thanks for the saving of little Sinners. To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. He gets not Water for his Feet, by his saving of such Sinners. There are abundance of dry-eyed Christians in the World, and abundance of dry-eyed Duties too: Duties that never was wetted with the tears of Contrition and Repentance, nor ever sweetened with

the great Sinners box of Oyntment. And the reason is, such sinners have not great sins to be saved from ; or if they have, they look upon them in the *diminishing-glass* of the Holy Law of God. But I rather believe that the Professors of our days want a due sense of what they are ; for verily, for the generality of them, both before and since Conversion, they have been sinners of a lusty size : But if their Eyes be holden, if Convictions are not shown, if their knowledge of their sins is but like to the eye-sight in Twilight, the Heart cannot be affected with that grace that has laid hold on the man, and so Christ Jesus loves much, and has little coming in. *1 Cor. 4. 23.*

Wherefore This way is the *wide* to step out of the way, to Tyre, to Sidon, to the Country of the Galilaeans, to the Coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and also to Mount Tabor, that he may lay hold of such kind of sinners as will love him to his liking, *Mark. 8. 23, 23, 25, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1000, 1001, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1005, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1009, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1017, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1020, 1021, 1022, 1023, 1024, 1025, 1026, 1027, 1028, 1029, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1030, 1031, 1032, 1033, 1034, 1035, 1036, 1037, 1038, 1039, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1040, 1041, 1042, 1043, 1044, 1045, 1046, 1047, 1048, 1049, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1050, 1051, 1052, 1053, 1054, 1055, 1056, 1057, 1058, 1059, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1060, 1061, 1062, 1063, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1073, 1074, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1080, 1081, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1090, 1091, 1092, 1093, 1094, 1095, 1096, 1097, 1098, 1099, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1100, 1101, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1110, 1111, 1112, 1113, 1114, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1118, 1119, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1120, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1124, 1125, 1126, 1127, 1128, 1129, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1130, 1131, 1132, 1133, 1134, 1135, 1136, 1137, 1138, 1139, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1140, 1141, 1142, 1143, 1144, 1145, 1146, 1147, 1148, 1149, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1150, 1151, 1152, 1153, 1154, 1155, 1156, 1157, 1158, 1159, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1160, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164, 1165, 1166, 1167, 1168, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1170, 1171, 1172, 1173, 1174, 1175, 1176, 1177, 1178, 1179, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1180, 1181, 1182, 1183, 1184, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194, 1195, 1196, 1197, 1198, 1199, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1200, 1201, 1202, 1203, 1204, 1205, 1206, 1207, 1208, 1209, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1210, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1214, 1215, 1216, 1217, 1218, 1219, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1220, 1221, 1222, 1223, 1224, 1225, 1226, 1227, 1228, 1229, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1230, 1231, 1232, 1233, 1234, 1235, 1236, 1237, 1238, 1239, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1240, 1241, 1242, 1243, 1244, 1245, 1246, 1247, 1248, 1249, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 1259, 1250, 1251, 1252, 1253, 1254, 1255, 1256, 1257, 1258, 1259, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1266, 1267, 1268, 1269, 1260, 1261, 1262, 1263, 1264, 1265, 1266, 1267, 1268, 1269, 1270, 1271, 1272, 1273, 1274, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1270, 1271, 1272, 1273, 1274, 1275, 1276, 1277, 1278, 1279, 1280, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1280, 1281, 1282, 1283, 1284, 1285, 1286, 1287, 1288, 1289, 1290, 1291, 1292, 1293, 1294, 1295, 1296, 1297, 1298, 1299, 1290, 1291, 1292, 1293, 1294, 1295, 1296, 1297, 1298, 1299, 1300, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1307, 1308, 1309, 1300, 1301, 1302, 1303, 1304, 1305, 1306, 1307, 1308, 1309, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316, 1317, 1318, 1319, 1310, 1311, 1312, 1313, 1314, 1315, 1316, 1317, 1318, 1319, 1320, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328, 1329, 1320, 1321, 1322, 1323, 1324, 1325, 1326, 1327, 1328, 1329, 1330, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1338, 1339, 1330, 1331, 1332, 1333, 1334, 1335, 1336, 1337, 1338, 1339, 1340, 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1340, 1341, 1342, 1343, 1344, 1345, 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1354, 1355, 1356, 1357, 1358, 1359, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1360, 1361, 1362, 1363, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1370, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1376, 1377, 1378, 1379, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1380, 1381, 1382, 1383, 1384, 1385, 1386, 1387, 1388, 1389, 1390, 1391, 1392, 1393, 1394, 1395, 1396, 1397, 1398, 1399, 1390, 1391, 1392, 1393, 1394, 1395, 1396, 1397, 1398, 1399, 1400, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, 1408, 1409, 1400, 1401, 1402, 1403, 1404, 1405, 1406, 1407, 1408, 1409, 1410, 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1418, 1419, 1410, 1411, 1412, 1413, 1414, 1415, 1416, 1417, 1418, 1419, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1423, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1427, 1428, 1429, 1420, 1421, 1422, 1423, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1427, 1428, 1429, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1433, 1434, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1438, 1439, 1430, 1431, 1432, 1433, 1434, 1435, 1436, 1437, 1438, 1439, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1440, 1441, 1442, 1443, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1449, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1450, 1451, 1452, 1453, 1454, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1458, 1459, 1460, 1461, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 1460, 1461, 1462, 1463, 1464, 1465, 1466, 1467, 1468, 1469, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1478, 1479, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1473, 1474, 1475, 1476, 1477, 1478, 1479, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1487, 1488, 1489, 1480, 1481, 1482, 1483, 1484, 1485, 1486, 1487, 1488, 1489, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1490, 1491, 1492, 1493, 1494, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1498, 1499, 1500, 1501, 1502, 1503, 1504, 1505, 1506, 1507,*

But thus much for the Sixth Reason, why Christ Jesus would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, to wit, because such sinners when converted, are apt to love him most. The Jerusalem-sinners were they that out-script, when they were Converted, in some things, all the Churches of the Gentiles. They were of one heart, and of one soul, neither said any of them, that ought of the things that they possessed were their own; neither was there any among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of Lands, or Houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet, &c. Acts 4. 32, 33, 34, 35. Now show me such another Pattern if you can. But why did these do thus? Oh! they were Jerusalem-sinners. These were the Men that but a little before, had killed the Prince of Life, and those to whom he did, that notwithstanding, send the first offer of Grace and Mercy. And the sense of this, took them up betwixt the Earth and the Heaven, and carried them down in such ways and methods, as could never be trodden by any since. They talk of the Church of Rome, and set her in her Primitive State, as a Pattern, and

Modern

Mother of Churches ; when the Truth is, they were the Jerusalem-sinners, when Converts, that out-did all the Churches that ever was.

Sevently, Christ Jesus would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners, because Grace, when it is received by such, finds matter to kindle upon more freely than it finds in other sinners. Great Sinners are like the dry Wood, or like great Candles, which burns best and shines with biggest light. I lay not this down, as I did those Reasons before, to shew, that when great sinners are Converted, they will be encouragement to others, though that is true; but to shew that Christ has a delight to see Grace, the Grace we receive, shine. We love to see things that bear a good gloss, yea, we chuse to buy such kind of matter to work upon, as will, if wrought up to what we intend, cast that lustre that we desire. Candles that burn not bright, we like not; Wood that is green will rather smother and spit, and smoke, and crack, and stonnce, than cast a brave light and pleasant heat. Wherefore great Folks care not much, not so much for such kind of things, as for them that will better answer their ends.

Hence Christ desires the biggest Sinner, in him there is Matter to work by, to wit, a great deal of sin; for as by the Tallow of the Candle, the Fire takes occasion to burn the brighter; so by the sin of the Soul, Grace takes occasion to shine the clearer. Little Candles shine but little, for there wanteth matter for the Fire to work upon; but in the great Sinner, here is more matter for Grace to work by. Faith shines, when it worketh towards Christ, through the sides of many and great Transgressors; and so does Love, for that much is forgiven. And what matter can be found in the Soul for Humility to work by so well, as by a sight, that I have been and am an abominable Sinner? And the same is to be said of Patience, Meekness, Gentleness, Self-denial, and of any other Grace. Grace takes occasion by the vileness of the man, to shine the more; even as by the ruggidness of a very strong Distemper, or Disease, the virtue of the Medicine is best made manifest. Where Sin abounds, Grace much more abounds. *Rom. v. 20.* A black string makes the Neck look whiter; great Sins makes Grace burn clearer. Some say when Grace and a good Nature meet together, then do

do make shining Christians; but I say, when Grace and a great Sinner meets, and when Grace shall subdue that great Sinner to it self, and shall operate after its kind in the Soul of that great Sinner, then we have a shining Christian; Witness all those of whom mention was made before.

Abraham was among the Idolaters when in the Land of *Affyria*, and served Idols with his Kindred on the other side of the Flood, *Jos. 24. 2. Gen. 11. 31.* but who when called, was there in the World, in whom Grace shone so bright as in him?

The *Thessalonians* were Idolaters before the Word of God came to them; but when they had received it, they became examples to all that did believe, in *Macedonia and Achaea*, *1 Thess. 1. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

God the Father, and *Jesus Christ* his Son, are for having things seen, for having the Word of Life held forth. They light not a Candle that it might be put under a Bushel, or under a Bed; but on a Candlestick, that all that come in may see the light, *Matt. 5. 15. Mar. 4. 21. Luk. 8. 16. chap. 11. 33.*

And

And, I say, as I said before, in whom is it like so to shine, as in the Souls of great sinners?

When the Jewish *Pharisees* dallied with the Gospel, Christ threatened to take it from them, and to give it to the barbarous *Heathens*, and *Idolaters*. Why so? For they, saith he, will bring forth the Friends thereof in their season. *Therefore I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Mat. 21. 41, 43.

I have often marvelled at our Youth, and said in my heart, What should be the reason that they should be so generally at this day debauched as they are! For they are now Profane to amazement: And sometimes I have thought one thing, and sometimes another: That is, why God should suffer it so to be. At last I have thought of this: How if the God whose ways are past finding out, should suffer it so to be now, that he might make of some of them the more glorious Saints hereafter. I know Sin is of the Devil, but it cannot work in the world without permission: and if it happens to be as I have thought, it will not be the first time that God the Lord hath

hath caught Satan in his own design. For my part, I believe that the time is at hand, that we shall see better Saints in the World, than has been seen in this many aday. And this Vilenes that at present does so much swallow up our Youth, is one cause of my thinking so: For out of them, for from among them, when God sets to his Hand, as of old, you shall see what penitent ones, what trembling ones, and what Admirers of Grace, will be found to profess the Gofpel, to the glory of God by Christ.

Alas! We are a company of worn-out Christians, our *Moon* is in the *Ware*; we are much more black than white, more dark than light; we shine but a little; Grace in the most of us, is decayed. But I say, when they of these debauched ones that are to be saved, shall be brought in; when these that look more like Devils than Men shall be Converted to *Christ*, (and I believe several of them will) then will *Christ* be exalted, Grace adored, the World prized, *Sions Paths* better trodden, and Men in the pursuite of their own Salvation, to the amazement of them that are left behind.

Just before *Christ* came into the Flesh, the World was Degenerated as it is now; The generality of the Men in *Jerusalem* were become either high and famous for Hypocrisy, or filthy base in their Lives. The Devil also was broke loose in his vicious manner, and had taken possession of many: Yea, I believe that there was never Generation before nor since, that could produce so many possessed with Devils, deformed, lame, blind, and infected with monstrous Diseases, as that Generation could. But what was the reason thereof? I mean the reason from God? Why one (and we may sum up more in that answer that *Christ* gave to his Disciples concerning him that was born Blind) was, that the Works of God might be made manifest in them, and that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, *Joh. 9. 2, 3. chap. 11. 4*.

Now if these Devils and Diseases, they possessed Men then, were to make way and work for an approaching *Christ* in Person, and for the declaring of his Power, why may we not think that now even now also, he is ready to come by his Spirit in the Gospel to heal many of the Debaucheries of our Age? I can not believe that Grace will take them

for there are but few that are fated: But yet it will take some, even some of the worst of Men, and make Blessed ones of them. But O! how these *Ring-leaders* in Vice, will then shine in Virtue! They will be the very Pillars in Churches, they will be as an Ensign in the Land; *The Lord their God shall save them in that day, as the Flock of his People, for they shall be as the Stones of a Crown, lift up as an Ensign upon the Land, Zech. 9. 16.* But who are these? Even Idolatrous *Ephraim*, and backsliding *Judah*; Ver. 13.

I know there is ground to fear, that the Iniquity of this Generation will be pursued with heavy Judgments: But that will not hinder what we have supposed: God took him a glorious Church out of Bloody *Jerusalem*, yea, out of the chief of the Sinners there, and left the rest to be taken and spoiled, and sold Thirty for a Penny, in the Nations where they were Captives. The Gospel working gloriously in a place, to the seizing upon many of the *ring-leaders* Sinners thereof, promiseth no security to the rest, but rather threatneth them with the heaviest and smartest Judgments; as in the Instance now given, we have a full demonstration; but in

defending, the Lord will defend his People ; and in saving, he will save his Inheritance.

Nor does this speak any great comfort to a decayed and backsliding sort of Christians, for the next time God rides Post with his Gospel, he will leave such Christians behind him. But I say, *Christ* is resolved to set up his Light in the World; yea, he is delighted to see his Graces shine, and therefore he commands that his Gospel should to that end, be offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners; for by great Sins it shineth most: Therefore he saith, *Begin at Jerusalem.*

Eighthly, And lastly, *Christ Jesus* will have Mercy to be offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, For that by that means the Impenitent that are left behind, will be at the Judgment, the more left without excuse.

God's Word has two edges, it can cut back-stroke and fore-stroke. If it doth thee no good, it will do thee hurt; 'Tis the favour of Life unto Life to those that receive it, but of Death unto Death to them that refuse it, 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16. But this is not all, the tender of Grace to the biggest Sinners, in the

first place, will not only leave the rest, or those that refuse it, in a deplorable condition, but will also stop their mouths, and cut off all pretence to excuse at that day. *If I had not come and spoken unto them, saith Christ, they had not had Sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin, for their sin of persevering in impenitence, Job 15. 22.*

But what did he speak to them? Why even that which I have told you; to wit, That he has in special, a delight in saving the biggest Sinners. He spake this in the way of his Doctrine, he spake this in the way of his Practice, even to the pouring out of his last breath before them, Luk. 23. 34.

Now since this is so, what can the Condemned at the Judgement say for themselves, why Sentence of Death should not be passed upon them? I say, what excuse can they make for themselves, when they shall be asked why they did not in the day of Salvation come to Christ to be saved? Will they have ground to say to the Lord, Thou wast only for saving of little Sinners, and therefore because they were great ones, they durst not come unto him; Or that thou hadst not compassion for the biggest Sinners,

therefore I died in delpair ; will these be excuses for them as the Case now standeth with them ? Is there not every where in God's Book a flat contradiction to this, in multitudes of Promises, of Invitations, of Examples, and the like ? Alas, alas ! there will then be there millions of Souls to confute this Plea ; ready I say, to stand up and say, O ! deceived World, Heaven swarms with such, as was, when they were in the World, to the full as bad as you.

Now this will kill all plea or excuse, why they should not perish in their sins ; for, the Text says, they shall see them there ; There shall be weeping, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of Heaven, and you your selves thrust out. And they shall come from the East, and from the West, and from the North, and from the South, and shall sit down in the Kingdom of God, Luk. 13. 28, 29. Out of which company it is easie to pick such, as sometimes were as bad People as any now breathe on the face of the Earth. What think you of the first Man, by whose sins there are millions now in Hell ? And so I may say, what think you of ten thousand more besides ?

But if the Word will not stifle and gagg them up, I speak now for amplification sake, the view of those who are saved shall.

There comes an *Incestuous Person* to the Barr, and pleads that the bigness of his Sins was a bar to his receiving the Promise; But will not his mouth be stopt as to that, when *Lust* and the *Incestuous Corinthian* shall be set before him, Gen. 19. 33, 34, 35, 36. 1 Cor. 5. 1, 2.

There comes a *Thief* and says, *Lord!* *my sin of Theft, I thought, was such as could not be pardoned by thee!* But when he shall see the *Thief* that was saved on the Cross, stand by, as clothed with beauteous Glory, what further can he be able to object? Yea, the *Lord* will produce ten thousand of his *Saints* at his coming, who shall after this manner execute Judgment upon all, and so convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him, Jude 15, 16. And these are hard speeches against him, To say that he was not able or willing to save Men, because of the greatness of their sins, or to say that they were disengaged by his Word from Repentance, because of the heinousness of their offences.

These things, I say, shall then be confuted ; He comes with ten thousand of his Saints to confute them, and to stop their mouths from making objections against their own eternal damnation.

Here is *Adam* the destroyer of the World ; here is *Lot* that lay with both his *Daughters* ; here is *Abraham* that was sometimes an *Idolater*, and *Jacob* that was a *Supplanter*, and *Ruben* that lay with his *Fathers Concubine*, and *Judah* that lay with his *Daughter in-Law*, and *Levy* and *Simeon* that wickedly slew the *Sechemites* ; and *Aaron* that made an *Idol* to be worshipped, and that proclaimed a Religious Feast unto it. Here is also *Rahab* the *Harlot*, and *Bathsheba* that bare a *Bastard* to *David*. Here is *Solomon* that great *Backslider*, and *Manasseh* that *man of Blood*, and a *Witch*. Time would fail to tell you of the *Woman of Ganaans Daughter*, of *Mary Magdalene*, of *Matthew the Publican*, and of *Gideon* and *Sampson*, and many thousands more.

Alas, alas ! I say, what will these Sinners do, that have, through their unbelief, eclipsed the glorious largeness of the mercy of God, and gave way to despair of Salvation because of the bigness of their sins.

For

For all these, though now glorious
Saints in Light, were sometimes Sinners
of the biggest size, who had sins that
were of a notorious hue; Yet now, I
say, they are in their shining and hea-
venly Robes before the Throne of God
and of the Lamb, Blessing for ever and
ever, that Son of God for their Sal-
vation, who dyed for them upon the Tree;
admiring that ever it should come into
their Hearts once to think of coming to
God by Christ: But above all, blessing
God for granting of them light to see
those encouragements in his Testament;
without which, without doubt, they had
been daunted and sunk down under guilt
of Sin and Despair, as their fellow sin-
ners have done.

But now they also are all Witnesses
for God and for his Grace against an un-
believing World; for as I said, they
shall come to *convince* the World of their
Speeches, their hard and unbelieving
words; that they have spoken concerning
the mercy of God, and the merits
of the Passion of his blessed Son *Jesus
christi*.

But will it not, think you, strangely
put to silence all such thoughts; and
words, and reasonings of the Ungodly

before the Barr of God ? doubtless it will ; yea, and will send them away from his presence also, with the greatest guilt that possibly can fasten upon the Consciences of Men.

For what will sting like this ? I have through mine own foolish, narrow, unworthy, undervaluing thoughts of the love and ability of *Christ* to save me, brought my self to everlasting ruine. 'Tis true, I was a horrible sinner, not one in a hundred did live so vile a life as I, but this should not have kept me from closing with *Jesus Christ* : I see now that there are abundance in Glory that once were as bad as I have been, but they were saved by Faith, and I am damned by Unbelief.

Wretch that I am ! why did not I give glory to the Redeeming Blood of *Jesus* ? Why did I not humbly cast my Soul at his blessed foot stool for Mercy ? Why did I judge of his ability to save me by the voice of my shallow reason, and the voice of a guilty Conscience ? Why betook not I my self to the holy Word of God ? Why did I not read and pray that I might understand, since now I perceive that God said then, *He giveth*

Liberally

liberally to them that pray, and upbraideth not, Jam. 1. 5.

Tis rational to think, that by such Cogitations as these, the unbelieving World will be torn in pieces before the Judgment of Christ. Especially those that have lived where they did or might have heard the Gospel of the Grace of God. Oh ! that saying, *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom at the Judgment, than for them,* will be better understood. See Luke 10. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

This Reason therefore standeth fast ; Namely, That Christ, by offering mercy in the first place to the biggest Sinners, now, will stop all mouths of the impenitent at the day of Judgment, and cut off all excuse that shall be attempted to be made (from the thoughts of the greatness of their sins) why they came not to him.

I have often thought of the day of Judgment, and how God will deal with sinners at that day : And I believe it will be managed with that sweetnes, with that equitableness, with that excellent Righteousnes, as to every sin, and circumstance, and aggravation thereof, that men that are damned, before the

Judgment is over, shall receive such conviction of the righteous Judgment of God upon them, and of their deserts of Hell fire, that they shall in themselves, conclude that there is all the reason in the world that they should be shut out of Heaven, and go to Hell-fire ; *These shall go away into everlasting fire*, Matt. 25. 46.

Only this will tare, That they have mist of Mercy and Glory, and obtained everlasting damnation through their unbelief. But it will tare but *themselves*, but their *own* Souls ; they will gnash upon *themselves* : For in that, Mercy was offered to the chief of them in the first place, and yet they were damned for rejecting of it : They were damned for forsaking what they had a propriety in ; for, forsaking their *own* Mercy.

And thus much for the Reasons. I will conclude with a word of Application.

The A P P L I C A T I O N.

First, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners ? Then this shews us how

make a right judgment of the heart of Christ to Men. Indeed we have advantage to guess at the goodness of his Heart, by many things ; as by his taking our nature upon him, his dying for us, his sending his Word and Ministers to us ; and all that we might be saved. But this of beginning to offer mercy to Jerusalem, is that which heightens all the rest ; for this doth not only confirm to us, that Love was the cause of his dying for us, but it shews us yet more the depth of that Love : He might have dyed for us, and yet have extended the benefit of his death to a few, as one might call them, of the best-conditioned sinners, to those who (though they were weak, and so could not but sin) yet made not a trade of sinning ; To those that sinned not lavishly. There are in the World, as one may call them, the moderate Sianers ; the sinners that mix Righteousness with their Pollutious ; the sinners that, though they be sinners, do what on their part lies, (some that are blind world think so) that they might be saved. I say, it had been Love, great Love, if he had dyed for none but such, and sent his love to such : But

that he should send out *conditions of Peace* to the biggest of Sinners ! yea, that they should be offered to them first of all ! (for so he means when he says, *Begin at Jerusalem.*) This is wonderful ! this shows his heart to purpose , as also the heart of God his Father who sent him to do thus.

There is nothing more incident to Men that are awake in their Souls , than to have wrong thoughts of God ; Thoughts that are narrow , and that pinch and pen up his Mercy to scanty and beggarly conclusions ; and ridged legal conditions ; supposing that it is rude and an intrenching upon his Majesty , to come our selves , or to invite others , until we have scraped and washed , and rubbed off as much of our dirt from us as we think is convenient , to make us somewhat orderly and handsome in his sight . Such never knew what these Words meant , *Begin at Jerusalem.* Yea , such in their hearts have compared the Father and his Son to niggardly rich Men , whose Money comes from them like drops of blood . True , says such , God has Mercy , but he is loth to part with it . You must please him well , if you get any from him :

He is not so free as many suppose, nor is he so willing to save as some pretended Gospellers imagine: But I ask such, If the Father and Son be not unspeakably free to shew Mercy, why was *this* Clause put into our Commission to preach the Gospel? Yea, why did he say, *Begin at Jerusalem*? For when men, through the weakness of their wits, have attempted to shew other reasons why *they* should have the first proffer of Mercy, yet I can prove (by many undeniable Reasons) that they of *Jerusalem* (to whom the Apostles made the *First* offer, according as they were commanded) were the biggest Sinners that ever did breathe upon the face of God's earth (set the unpardonable sin aside) upon which my Doctrine stands like a Rock; That *Jesus* the Son of God would have Mercy in the first place offered to the biggest Sinners: And if this doth not shew the heart of the Father and the Son to be infinitely free in bestowing forgiveness of Sins, I confess my self mistaken.

Neither is there, set this aside, another Argument like it, to shew us the willingness of *Christ* to save Sinners: For, as was said before, all the rest of

the signs of Christ's mercifulness might have been limitted to Sinners that are so and so qualified; but when he says, *Begin at Jerusalem*, the Line is stretched out to the utmost, no man can imagine beyond it; and it is folly here to pinch and pare, to narrow, and seek to bring it within scanty bounds, for he plainly saith, *Begin at Jerusalem*. The biggest Sinner, is the biggest Sinner; the biggest is the *Jerusalem-sinner*.

'Tis true, he saith that *Repentance and Remission of sins must go together*; but yet *Remission* is sent to the chief, the *Jerusalem sinner*; nor doth *Repentance* lessen at all the *Jerusalem-sinner's* crimes; it diminisheth none of his sins, nor causes that there should be so much as half a one, the fewer: It only puts a stop to the *Jerusalem-sinner's* course, and makes him willing to be saved freely by *Grace*; and for time to come to be governed by that blessed *Word* that has brought the *Tidings of good things* to him.

Besides, no man shews himself willing to be saved that repenterh not of his deeds, for he that goes on still in his trespasses, declares that he is resolved to pursue his own damnation further.

Learn then to judge of the largeness of God's heart, and of the heart of his Son *Jesus Christ*, by the Word: Judge not thereof by feeling, nor by the reports of thy Conscience; Conscience is oft-times here befooled and made to go quite besides the Word: 'Twas judging without the Word that made *David* say, *I am cast off from God's eyes, and shall perish one day by the hand of *Saul**, *Psal. 31.22. 1 Sam. 27. 1.*

The Word had told him another thing; namely, that he should be King in his stead. Our Text says also, that *Jesus Christ* bids Preachers in their preaching Repentance and Remission of Sins, *Begin first at *Jerusalem**; Thereby declaring most truly, the infinite largeness of the merciful heart of God and his Son, to the sinful Children of Men.

Judge thou, I say, therefore of the goodness of the heart of God and his Son, by this Text, and by other of the same import; so shalt thou not dishonour the grace of God, nor needst fly fright thy self, nor give away thy Faith, nor gratifie the Devil, nor lose the benefit of his Word: I speak now to weak Believers.

Secondly.

Secondly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners, to the Jerusalem sinners? Then by this also, you must learn to judge of the Sufficiency of the merits of Christ; not that the Merits of Christ can be comprehended, for that they are beyond the Conceptions of the whole World, being called *The unsearchable riches of Christ*; but yet they may be apprehended to a considerable degree. Now the way to apprehend them most, is to consider what offers, after his Resurrection, he makes of his Grace to Sinners; for to be sure he will not offer beyond the virtue of his Merits; because as Grace is the cause of his Merits, so his Merits are the basis and bounds, upon and by which his Grace stands good, and is let out to Sinners. Doth he then command that his Mercy should be offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners? It declares that there is a sufficiency in his Blood to save the biggest Sinners. The Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin. And again, *Be it known unto you Men and Brethren, That through this Man (this Man's Merits) is preached to you the forgiveness of Sins, and by him All that believe are justified from All things from which*

which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Acts 13. 38.

Observe then thy Rule to make Judgment of the Sufficiency of the blessed Merits of thy Saviour; if he had not been able to have reconciled the biggest Sinners to his Father by his Blood, he would not have sent to them; have sent to them in the *first place* the Doctrine of Remission of Sins; for Remission of Sins is through Faith in his Blood: We are justified freely by the Grace of God, through the Redemption that is in the Blood of Christ. Upon the square, as I may call it, of the worthiness of the Blood of Christ, Grace Acts, and offers Forgiveness of Sin to Men, Ephes. 1. 7. chap. 2. 13, 14. Colos. 1. 20, 21, 22.

Hence therefore we must gather, That the Blood of Christ is of infinite value, for that he offereth Mercy to the biggest of Sinners: Nay further, since he offereth Mercy in the *first place* to the biggest Sinners; Considering also that this first act of his, is that which the World will take notice of, and expect; it should be continued unto the end: Also it is a disparagement to a Man that seeks his own Glory in what he undertakes, to do that for a spurt, which he cannot

cannot continue and hold out in : This is our Lord's own Argument, *He began to build, saith he, but was not able to finish,* Luk. 14. 28, 29, 30.

Shouldst thou hear a Man say, I am resolved to be kind to the Poor, and should begin giving with handfuls of *Guinea's*, you would conclude that either he is wonderful rich, or must straighten his hand, or will soon be at the bottom of his Riches. Why this is the Case, Christ at his Resurrection gave it out that he would be good to the World; and first sends to the biggest Sinners, with an intent to have Mercy on them. Now the biggest Sinners cannot be saved but by abundance of Grace, 'tis not a little that will save great sinners, Rom. 5. 17. And I say again, since the Lord Jesus mounts thus high at the first, and sends to the *Jerusalem-sinners*, that they may come first to partake of his Mercy; it follows that either he has unsearchable Riches of Grace and Worth in himself, or else he must straighten his hand, or his Grace and Merits will be spent before the World's at an end. But let it be believed, as surely as spoken, he is still as full as ever ! He is not a jot the poorer for all the *Forgivenesses* that he has

has given away to great Sinners; Also he is still as free as at first, for he never yet called back this Word, *Begin at the Jerusalem-sinners.* And as I said, since his Grace is extended according to the worth of his Merits; I conclude, that there is the same vertue in his Merits to save now, as there was at the very beginning.

O the Riches of the Grace of Christ! Oh the Riches of the Blood of Christ!

Thirdly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners, Then here is encouragement for you that think, for wicked hearts and lives, you have not your fellows in the World; yet to come to him.

There is a People that therefore fear lest they should be rejected of Jesus Christ, because of the greatness of their sins; when as you see here, such are sent to, sent to by Jesus Christ to come to him for Mercy; *Begin at Jerusalem:* Never did one thing answer another more fitly in this world, than this Text fitteth such kind of sinners. As Face answereth Face in a Glass, so this Text answereth the necessities of such sinners. What can a Man say more, but that he stands in the rank of the biggest sinners;

let

Let him stretch himself whether he can, and think of himself to the utmost, he can but conclude himself to be one of the biggest Sinners: And what then? Why the Text meets him in the very Face, and saith, *Christ offereth Mercy to the biggest Sinners, to the very Jerusalem Sinners.* What more can be objected? Nay, he doth not only offer to such his Mercy, but to them 'tis commanded to be offered in the first place; *Begin at Jerusalem. Preach Repentance and Remission of Sins among all Nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* Is not here encouragement for those that think, for wicked Hearts and Lives, they have not their fellows in the World?

Objection, But I have a Heart as hard as a Rock.

Answe. Well, but this doth but prove thee a biggest sinner.

Object. But my Heart continually frets against the Lord?

Answe. Well, this doth but prove thee a biggest sinner.

Object. But I have been desperate in sinful courses.

Answe. Well, stand thou with the number of the biggest sinners.

Object.

Object. But my grey Head is found in
the way of wickedness ?

Answ. Well thou art in the rank of the
biggest sinners.

Object. But I have not only a base Heart,
but I have lived a debauched life ?

Answ. Stand thou also among those that
are called the biggest sinners. And what
then ? Why the Text swoops you all ;
you cannot object your selves beyond the
Text : It has a particular message to the
biggest sinners. I say, it swoops you all.

Object. But I am a Reprobate ?

Answ. Now thou talkest like a fool, and
medlest with what thou understandest
not : No sin, but the sin of final impeni-
tence, can prove a Man a Reprobate.
And I am sure thou hast not arrived as
yet unto that : Therefore thou under-
standest not what thou sayest, and makest
groundless conclusions against thy self.
Say thou art a Sinner, and I will hold
with thee. Say thou art a great sinner,
and I will say so too. Yea, say thou art
one of the biggest sinners and spare not,
for the Text yet is beyond thee, is yet
betwixt Hell and thee ; *Begin at Jerusa-
lem*, has yet a smile upon thee : And
thou talkest as if thou wast a Reprobate,
and that the greatness of thy sins do
prava

prove thee so to be ; when yet they of *Jerusalem* were not such , whose sins I dare say , were such , both for bigness and heinousness , as thou art not capable of committing beyond them ; unless now , after thou hast received Conviction that the Lord *Jesus* is the only Saviour of the World , thou shouldest wickedly and despightfully turn thy self from him , and conclude he is not to be trusted to for Life , and so crucifie him for a Cheat a-
fr. *th.* This I must confess , will bring a Man under the *Black rod* , and set him in danger of eternal Damnation , *Heb.* 6.6. *chap.* 10. 29. This is trampling under foot the Son of God , and counting his Blood an unholy thing. *This did they of Jerusalem* , but they did it ignorantly in Unbelief , and so were yet capable of Mercy : But to do this against professed Light , and to stand to it , puts a man beyond the Text indeed , *Act.* 3, 14, 15, 16, 17. *1 Tim.* 1. 13.

But I say , what is this to him , that would fain be saved by *Christ* ? His sins did , as to greatness , never yet reach to the nature of the sins that the sinners intended by the Text , had made themselves guilty of. He that would be saved by *Christ* , has an honourable esteem of him ,

but

but they of *Jerusalem* preferred a Murderer before him ; but as for him, they cried, away away with him, 'tis not fit that he should live. Perhaps thou wilt object, *That thy self hast a thousand times preferred a stinking Lust before him.* I answer, Be it so, it is but what is common to Men to do ; nor doth the Lord *Jesus* make such a foolish Life a Barr to thee, to forbid thy coming to him, or a Bond to his Grace, that it might be kept from thee ; but admits of thy Repentance, and offereth himself unto thee freely, as thou standest among the *Jerusalem-sinners*.

Take therefore encouragement, Man ; Mercy is, by the Text, held forth to the biggest sinners. - Yea, put thy self into the number of the worst by reckoning, that thou mayest be one of the first, and mayest not be put off till the biggest sinners are served : For the biggest sinners are first invited ; consequently, if they come, they are like to be the first that shall be served. 'Twas so with *Jerusalem* ; *Jerusalem-sinners* were they that were first invited, and those of them that came first, (and there came three thousand of them the first day they were invited,) how many came afterwards,

none can tell ; they were first served.

Put in thy Name, Man, among the biggest, lest thou art made to wait till they are served. You have some men that think themselves very cunning, because they put up their Names in their Prayers among them that feign it, saying, God, I thank thee, I am not so bad as the worst ; but believe it, if they be saved at all, they shall be saved in the last place. The first in their own eyes shall be served last, and the last, or worst, shall be first. The Text insinuates it, Begin at Jerusalem ; and Reason backs it, for they have most need. Behold ye therefore, how God's ways are above ours ; we are for serving the worst last, God is for serving the worst first. The Man at the Pool, that to my thinking, was longest in his Disease, and most helpless as to his Cure, was first healed, yea, he only was healed ; for we read that Christ healed him, but we read not then that he healed one more there, Joh. 5. 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9.

Wherefore if thou wouldst soonest be served, put in thy Name among the very worst of sinners. Say, when thou art upon thy knees, Lord ! here is a Jerusalem-sinner ! a sinner of the biggest size ! one whose burden is of the greatest bulk and

and heaviest weight! one that cannot stand long without sinking into Hell, without thy supporting hand! Be not thou far from me, O Lord: O my strength, hast thou no help me.

I say, put in thy Name with Magdalene, with Manasseb, that thou mayest fare as the Magdalen and the Manasseb sinners do. The Man in the Gospel made the desperate condition of his Child, an argument with Christ to hasten his Cure: Sir, Come down, saith he, ere my Child die, John 4. 49. And Christ regarded his haste, saying, Go thy way, thy Son liveth, Ver. 50. Haste requires haste. David was for speed; Deliver me speedily; hear me speedily, answer me speedily, Psal. 34. 2. Psal. 69. 17. Psal. 102. 2. But why speedily? I am in the Net, I am in trouble, my days consume like smoke, Psal. 31. 4. Psal. 69. 17. Psal. 102. 3. Deep calleth unto deep; necessity calls for help; great necessity for present help. Wherefore I say, be ruled by me in this matter; feign not thy self another Man, if thou hast been a filthy sinner, but go in thy colours to Jesus Christ, and put thy self among the most Vile, and let him alone to put thee among the Children.

Jer. 3, 19. Confess all that thou knowest of thy self ; I know thou wilt find it hard work to do thus ; especially if thy mind be legal ; but do it, lest thou stay, and be deferred with the little sinners, until the great ones have had their turns. What do you think David intended when he said, his Wounds stunk and were corrupted, but to hasten God to have mercy upon him, and not to defer his Cure. Lord, says he, I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly. I go mourning all the day long. I am feeble, and sore broken by reason of the disquietment of my heart , Psal. 38. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

David knew what he did by all this, he knew that his making the worst of his Case, was the way to speedy help, and that a feigning and dissembling the matter with God, was the next way to a denial, as to his Forgiveness.

I have one thing more to offer for thy encouragement who deemest thy self one of the biggest sinners ; And that is, Thou art as it were, called by thy Name, in the first place, to come in for Mercy. Thou Man of Jerusalem, hearken to thy Gall ; Men do so in Courts of Judicature, and presently cry out, Here, Sir ; and then they shoulder and crond, and say,

Pray

Pray give way, I am called into the Court. Why, this is thy Case, thou great, thou *Jerusalem-sinner*; be of good cheer, he calleth thee, *Mark* 10. 46, 47, 48, 49. Why sittest thou still? arise; why standest thou still? Come Man. Thy *Call* should give thee *authority* to come. *Begin at Jerusalem*, is thy call and authority to come; Wherefore up, and shou-
der it, Man: Say, Stand away Devil, Christ calls me, stand away Unbelief, Christ calls me: Stand away all ye my discour-
aging Apprehensions, for my Saviour calls me to him to receive of his Mercy. Men will do thus, as I said, in Courts below; and why shouldst not thou approach thus to the Court above. The *Jerusalem-sin-
ner* is first in *Thought*, first in *Commission*, first in the *Record of Names*, and there-
fore should give attendance with expecta-
tion, that he is first to receive Mercy of God.

Is not this an encouragement to the biggest sinners to make their applica-
tion to Christ for Mercy? Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, doth also confirm this thing, that is, that the biggest sinner, and he that has the biggest burden, is he who is first invited. Christ pointed over the heads of thousands, us the

fits on the Throne of Grace, directly to such a Man; and says, Bring in hither the maimed, the halt, and the blind; Let the Jerusalem-sinner that stands there behind, come to me. Wherefore since Christ says come, to thee, let the Angels make a lane, and let all Men give place, that the Jerusalem-sinner may come to Jesus Christ for Mercy.

Fourthly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners? Then come thou Profane Wretch, and let me a little enter an argument with thee; Why wilt thou not come to Jesus Christ, since thou art a Jerusalem-sinner? How canst thou find in thy heart to set thy self against Grace, against such Grace as offereth Mercy to thee? What Spirit possesseth thee, and holds thee back from a sincere closure with thy Saviour? Behold God groaningly complains of thee, saying, But Israel would none of me. When I called, none did answer. Psal. 81. 11. Isa. 66. 4. I say, Shall God enter this Complaint against thee? Why dost thou put him off? why dost thou stop thine ear? Canst thou defend thy self? When thou art called to an account for thy neglects of so great Salvation, what canst thou answer? Or

doest

doest thou think thou shalt escape the Judgment? *Heb. 2. 3.*

No more such Christs! There will be no more such Christs, sinner! Oh! put not the day, the day of Grace, away from thee! If it be once gone, 'twill never come again, Sinner.

But what is it that has got thy Heart, and that keeps it from thy Saviour? Who in the Heavens can be compared unto the Lord? Who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the Lord? *Psal. 89. 6.* Hast thou, thinkest thou, found any thing so good as Jesus Christ? Is there any among thy Sins, thy Companions, and foolish Delights, that like Christ, can help thee in the day of thy distress? Behold, the greatness of thy sins cannot hinder; let not the stubbornness of thy Heart hinder thee, Sinner.

Objection. *But I am ashamed.*

Answer, Oh! don't be ashamed to be saved, Sinner.

Object. *But my old Companions will mock me.*

Ans. Oh! don't be mocked out of Eternal Life, Sinner.

Thy stubbornness affects, afflicts the Heart of thy Saviour. Carest thou not for this? Of old, *He beheld the City,*

and wept over it. Canst thou hear this, and not be concerned? *Luke 19. 41, 42.* Shall Christ weep to see thy Soul going on to destruction, and wilt thou sport thy self in *That way?* Yea, shall Christ, that can be eternally Happy without thee, be more afflicted at the thoughts of the loss of thy Soul, than thy self, who art certainly eternally miserable if thou neglectest to come to him?

Those things that keep thee and thy Saviour, on thy part, asunder, are but Bubbles; the least prick of an affliction, will let out, as to thee, what now thou thinkest is worth the venture of Heaven to enjoy.

Hast thou not *Reason?* Canst thou not so much as once soberly think of thy dying hour? or of, whether thy sinful life will drive thee then? Hast thou no *Conscience?* or having one, is it rocked so fast asleep by Sin, or made so weary with an unsuccessful calling upon thee, that it is laid down, and cares for thee no more? Poor Man, thy state is to be lamented. Hast no *Judgment?* Art not able to conclude, that to be saved, is better than to burn in Hell; and that *Eternal Life, with God's favour,* is better than a *Temporal Life in God's displeasure?*

pleasure? Hast no affliction but what is
42. bruitish? what, none at all? No affection
ing for the God that made thee? What,
ors none for his loving Son that has shewed
ist, his love, and dyed for thee? Is not He
out even worth thy affection? O poor Man!
of which is strongest, think'st thou, God or
ho thee? If thou art not able to overcome
ou him, thou art a fool for standing out
hy against him; Mat. 5. 25, 26. *It is a fear-
ut ful thing to fall into the hands of the Liv-
n ing God.* He will gripe hard, his Fist
t is stronger than a Lions Paw; take heed
2 of him, he will be angry if you despise
2 his Son; and will you stand guilty in your
Trespasses, when he offereth you his
Grace and Favour? Exad. 34. 6, 7, 10, 11,
10, 29, 30, 31.



Now we come to the Text, *Big Maran-*
at Jerusalem. This Text, though it be
now one of the brightest Stars that shi-
ne in the Bible, because there is in it, as
full, if not the fullest offer of Grace that
can be imagined, to the Sons of Men;
yet to them that shall perish from under
this Word, even this Text will be to
such, *one of the basest Goats in Hell.*

This Text therefore will save thee, or
will shear; there is no shifting of it.

If it saves thee, it will set thee high ; if it sinks thee, it will set thee low.

But, I say, Why so unconcerned ? Hast no Soul ? Or dost think thou mayest lose thy Soul, and save thy self ? Is it not pity, had it otherwise been the Will of God, that ever thou wast made a Man, for that thou settest so little by thy Soul ?

Sinner, Take the Invitation ; Thou art called upon to come to Christ : Nor art thou called upon but by order from the Son of God, though thou shouldest happen to come of the biggest sinners : For he has bid us offer Mercy, as to all the World in general, so in the first place, *To the Sinners of Jerusalem* ; or to the biggest sinners.

Fifthly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners ? Then this shows how unreasonable a thing it is, for men to despair of Mercy. For those that presume, I shall say something to them afterward.

I now speak to them that Despair. There are four sorts of Despair. There is the despair of Devils ; There is the despair of Souls in Hell ; There is the despair that is grounded upon Mens Deficiency.

iciency; And there is the despair that they are perplexed with that are willing to be saved, but are too strongly born down with the burden of their sins.

The despair of Devils, the Damned's despair, and that despair that a Man has of attaining of Life, because of his own Defeience, are all unrealoable. Why should not Devils and Damned Souls despair? Yea, why should not Man despair of getting to Heaven by his own abilities? I therefore am concerned only with the fourth sort of Despair, to wit, with the despair of those that would be saved, but are to strongly born down with the burden of their sins.

I say therefore to thee that art thus; And why Despair? Thy despair, if it was reasonable, should flow from thee; because fobad in the Land that is beyond the Graves; or because thou certainly knowest that Christ will not, or cannot save thee. But for the first, thou art yet in the Land of the living; and for the second, thee that art bound to believe the quite assured God is able to save to the uttermost, whom that come to God by him; and if he were not willing, he would not have commanded that Mercy in the first place should be offered to the biggest goods

biggest sinners. Besides, he hath said, And let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take the Water of Life freely; that is, with all my heart. What ground now is here for Despair? If thou sayest, The number and burden of my sins. I answer, Nay: That is rather a ground for Faith; because such an one above all others, is invited by Christ to come unto him, yea, promised Rest and Forgiveness if they come, *Matt. 11. 28.* What ground then to despair? Verily none at all. Thy despair then is a thing unreasonable, and without footing in the Word.

But I have no experience of God's love, God has given me no comfort, or ground of hope, though I have waited upon him for it many a day.

Thou hast experience of God's love, for that he has opened thine eyes to see thy sins; and for that he has given thee desires to be saved by Jesus Christ. For by thy sense of Sin thou art made to see thy poverty of Spirit, and this has laid thee under a sure ground of hope that Heaven shall be thine hereafter.

Also thy desire to be saved by Christ has put thee under another Promise, so there is now to hold thee up in hope, though

thought thy present burden be never so heavy, Matr. 5. 3, 6. As for what thou sayest, as to God's silence to thee, perhaps he has spoken to thee once or twice already, but thou hast not perceived it, Job 33. 14, 15.

However thou hast Christ Crucified, set forth before thine eyes in the Bible, and an invitation to come unto him, though thou be a *Jerusalem-sinner*, tho thou be a biggest Sinner; and so no ground to despair. What if God will be silent to thee, is that ground of despair? Not at all, so long as there is a Promise in the Bible that God will in no wise cast away the coming sinner, and so long as he invites the *Jerusalem-sinner* to come unto him, Job. 6. 37.

Build not therefore Despair upon these things, they are no sufficient foundation for it, such plenty of Promises being in the Bible; and such a discovery of his Mercy to great sinners of old, especially since we have withall a Clause in the Commission given to Ministers to Preach, that they should begin with the *Jerusalem-sinner*, in their offering of Mercy to the World.

Besides, God says, *They that wait upon the Lord, shall renew their strength, they*

shall mount up with wings like Eagles; but perhaps it may be long first, I waited long, saith David, and did seek the Lord, and at length his cry was heard: Wherefore he bids his Soul wait on God, and says, for it is good so to do before thy Saints, *Psal. 40. 1. Psal. 62. 5. Psal. 62. 9.*

And what if thou waitest upon God all thy days? Is it below thee? And what if God will cross his Book and blot out the hand-writing that is against thee, and not let thee know it as yet? Is it fit to say unto God, *Thou art hard-hearted*? Despair not. Thou hast no ground to despair, so long as thou livest in this World. 'Tis a sin to begin to despair before one sets his foot over the threshold of Hell-gates. For them that are there, let them despair; and spare not; but as for thee, thou hast no ground to do it. What! Despair of Bread, in a Land that is full of Corn! Despair of Mercy when our God is full of Mercy! Despair of Mercy, when God goes about by his Ministers, beseeching of Sinners to be reconciled unto him! *2 Cor. 5. 18, 19, 20.*

Thou scrupulous fool, where canst thou find that God was ever false to his promise,

misle, or that he ever deceived the Soul that ventured it self upon him? He often calls upon Sinners to trust him, though they walk in darkness and have no light, *Isa. 50. 10.*

They have his Promise and Oath for their salvation, that flee for refuge to the hope set before them, *Heb. 6. 17, 18.*

Despair! When we have a God of Mercy, and a Redeeming Christ Alive! For shame forbear: Let them despair that dwell where there is no God, and that are confined to those Chambers of Death, which can be reached by no Redemption.

A Living Man despair! When he is chid for murmuring and complaining! *Eam. 3. 39.* Oh! so long as we are where Promises swarm, where Mercy is proclaimed, where Grace reigns, and where Jerusalem-sinners are privileged with the first offer of Mercy, it is a base thing to despair!

Despair undervalues the Promise, undervalues the Invitation, undervalues the proffer of Grace. *Despair* undervalues the ability of God the Father, and the redeeming Blood of Christ his Son: Oh unreasonable *Despair!*

Despair makes Man God's Judge ; 'tis a Controller of the Promise, a Contradictor of Christ in his large offers of Mercy : And one that undertakes to make *Unbelief* the great manager of our Reason and Judgment, in determining about what God can and will do for Sinners.

Despair ! It is the Devil's fellow, the Devil's master ; yea, the Chains with which he is captivated and held under darkness for ever : And to give way thereto in a Land, in a State and Time that flows with Milk and Honey , is an uncomely thing.

I would say to my Soul ; O my Soul ! this is not the place of Despair, this is not the time to despair in : As long as mine eyes can find a Promise in the Bible, as long as there is the least mention of Grace, as long as there is a moment left me of breath or life in this World ; so long will I wait or look for Mercy ; so long will I fight against Unbelief and Despair.

This is the way to honour God and Christ : this is the way to set the Crown on the Promise ; this is the way to welcome the Invitation, and Inviter ; and this is the way to thrust thy self under the shelter

shelter and protection of the word of Grace. Never despair so long as our Text is alive, for that doth sound it out, *That Mercy by Christ is offered in the first place to the biggest sinner.*

Despair is an unprofitable thing, 'twill make a man weary of waiting upon God, 2 King. 6. 33. 'Twill make a man forsake God, and seek his Heaven in the good things of this world, Gen. 4. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. 'Twill make a man his own tormenter, and flounce and fling like a wild Bull in a mire, Isa. 31. 20.

Despair! It drives a man to the study of his own ruin, and brings him at last to be his own Executioner, 2 Sam. 17. 22. Matt. 27. 32. 40. 5.

Besides, I am perswaded also, that Despair is the cause that there are so many that would fain be Atheists in the World: For because they have entertained a Conceit that God will never be merciful to them; therefore they labour to persuade themselves that there is no God at all, as if their disbelief would kill God, or cause him to cease to be. A poor shift for an Immortal Soul, for a Soul who liketh not to retain God in its knowledge! If this be the best that Despair can do, let it go, Man; and betake thy

thy self to Faith, to Prayer, to wait for God, and to hope, in despite of ten thousand doubts. And for thy encouragement, take yet (as an addition to what has already been said) these following Scriptores; *The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy*, Pial. 147, 11.

Whence note, They fear not God, that hope not in his mercy. Also, God is angry with them that hope not in his Mercy, for he only taketh pleasure in them that hope. He that believeth, or hath received his Testimony, hath set to his Seal that God is true, Joh. 3, 33. But he that receiveth it not, hath made him a liar, and that is a very unworthy thing, 1 Joh. 5, 10, 11. Let the Wicked forsake his ways, and the Unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly multiply pardons, Isa. 55, 7. Perhaps thou art weary of thy ways, but art not weary of thy thoughts; of thy unbelieving and despairing thoughts: Now God also would have thee cast away these thoughts, as such which he deserveth not at thy hands, for he will have mercy upon thee, and he will abundantly pardon.

O fools ! and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken, Luke 24.25. Mark you here, slowness to believe is a piece of folly. Ay ! but sayest thou, I do believe some, and I believe what can make against me. Ay, but Sinner, Christ Jesus here calls thee fool for not believing All. Believe All, and despair if thou canst. He that believes All, believes that Text that saith, Christ would have Mercy Preached first to the Jerusalem sinners. He that believeth All, believeth all the Promises and Consolations of the Word; and the Promises and Consolations of the Word, weigh heavier than do all the Curse's and Threatnings of the Law. And Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment. Wherefore believe All, and Mercy will to thy Conscience, weigh Judgment down; and so minister Comfort to thy Soul. The Lord take the Yoke from off thy Jaws, since he has set Meat before thee, H. f. v. 4. And help thee to remember that he is pleased in the first place to offer Mercy to the biggest sinners.

Sixtly, Since Jesus Christ would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest sinners, Let Souls see that they by right hold thereof, lest they, notwithstanding, indeed come short thereof.

Each

Faith only knows how to deal with Mercy ; wherefore put not in the place thereof *Presumption*. I have observed , that as there are Herbs and Flowers in our Gardens, so there are their Counterfeits in the Field ; only they are distinguished from the other by the Name of *Wild Onions*. Why, there is Faith, and *Wild Faith*, and *Wild Faith* is this *Presumption*? I call it *Wild Faith*, because God never placed it in his Garden, his Church ; 'tis only to be found in the Field , the World. I also call it *Wild Faith*, because it only grows up, and is nourished where other *wild notions* abounds. Wherefore take heed of this, and all may be well : For this *presumptuousness* is a very heinous thing in the eyes of God : *The Soul*, saith he, *that shall do ought presumptuously* (whether born in the Land or a stranger) *the same reproacheth the Lord* ; *And that Soul shall be cut off from among his people*, Num 15.30.

The thoughts of this made David tremble, and pray, *That God would hold him back from presumptuous sins, and not suffer them to have dominion over him*, Psal. 19. 13.

Now this *Presumption*, then put its self in the place of Faith, when it tampereth with the promise for Life, while the Soul is a stranger to Repentance. Where-

Wherefore you have in the Text, to prevent doing thus, both *Repentance* and *Remission of Sins* to be offered to *Jerusalem*, not *Remission without Repentance*: For all that repent not shall perish, let them presume on Grace and the Promise while they will, *Luk. 13. 1, 2, 3.*

Presumption then is that which severeth *Faith* and *Repentance*, concluding that the Soul shall be saved by Grace, though the man was never made sorry for his sins, nor the love of the Heart turned therefrom. This is to be *self-willed*, as *Peter* has it. And this is a despising the Word of the Lord, for that has put *Repentance* and *Faith* together, *Mark 1. 14.* And because he hath despised the Word of the Lord, and hath broken the Commandment, that Soul shall utterly be cut off: his iniquities shall be upon him, *Numb. 15. 31.*

Let such therefore look it, who yet are, and abide in their sins; for such, if they hope, as they are, to be saved, presume upon the grace of God. Wherefore *Presumption* and not *hearkning to God's Word*, are put together, *Deut. 17. 12.*

Again, these men presume when they are resolved to abide in their sins, and

signs, yet expect to be saved by God's grace through Christ. This is as much as to say, God liketh of Sin as well as I do, and careth not how men live, if so be they lean upon his Son. Of this sort are they that build up Zion with Blood, and Jerusalem with Iniquity; That Judge for reward, and teach for hire, and Divine for money, and lean upon the Lord, Mic. 3, 10, 11. This is doing things with an high hand against the Lord our God, and a taking him, as it were, at that Catch! This is, as we lay among men, to seek to put a trick upon God, as if he had not sufficiently fortified his Proposals of Grace by his holy Word, against all such kind of fools as these. But look to it,

Such will be found at the day of God, not among that great company of Jerusalem-sinners, that shall be saved by Grace, but among those that have been the great abusers of the grace of God in the World. These that say, Let us sin that Grace may abound, and let us do Evil that Good may come, their Damnation is just. And if so, they are a great way off of that Salvation that is by Jesus Christ presented to the Jerusalem sinners.

I have therefore these things to propound to that Jerusalem-sinner that would know,

know, if he may be so bold to venture himself upon this Grace.

First, Dost thou see thy sins?

Secondly, Art thou weary of them?

Thirdly, Wouldst thou with all thy heart be saved by Jesus Christ? I dare say no less, I dare lay no more. But if it be truly thus with thee, how great soever thy sins have been, how bad soever thou feelest thy heart, how far soever thou art from thinking that God has mercy for thee; thou art the Man, the *Jerusalem-sinner*, that the Word of God has conquered, and to whom it offereth free Remission of sins, by the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ.

When the Jayler cried out, Sirs, What must I do to be saved? The answer was, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. He that sees his sins aright, is brought to his wits-end by them, and he that is so, is willing to part from them, and to be saved by the grace of God.

If this be thy Case, fear not, give no way to Despair, thou presumest not, if thou believest to life everlasting in Jesus Christ. Yea, Christ is prepared for such as thou art.

There-

Therefore take good courage and believe. The design of Satan is to tell the Presumptuous, that their presuming on Mercy is good; but to persuade the Believer, that his believing is impudent bold dealing with God. I never heard a presumptuous man in my life, say that he was afraid that he presumed; but I have heard many an honest humble Soul say, that they have been afraid that their Faith has been Presumption. Why should Satan molest those whose ways he knows will bring them to him? And who can think that he should be quiet when men take the right course to escape his hellish snares. This therefore is the reason why the truly humbled is opposed, while the Presumptuous goes on by *Wind and Tide*. The truly humble, Satan hates, but he laughs to see the folly of the other.

Does thy hand and heart tremble? Upon thee the Promise smiles; *To this man will I look* says God, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my Word, Isa. 66. 2.

What therefore I have said of Presumption, concerns not the humble in Spirit at all. I therefore am for gathering up the Stones, and for taking the Stumbling-

bling-blocks out of the way of God's people; and for warning of them that they lay the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces, and that are for presuming upon God's mercy; and let them look to themselves, *Ezekiel 14.6, 7, 8.*

Also our Text stands firm as ever it did, and our Observation is still of force, *That Jesus Christ would have mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners.* So then, let none *Despair*, let none *Presume*; Let none *despair* that are sorry for their sins, and would be saved by Jesus Christ: Let none *Presume*, that abide in the liking of their sins, though they seem to know the exceeding grace of Christ; for though the door stand wide open for the reception of the *Penitent*, yet 'tis fast enough barr'd and bolted against the presumptuous sinner. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, whatsoever a man sows, that he shall reap.* It cannot be that God should be *wheaded out* of his Mercy, or prevailed upon by lips of dissimulation; *He knows them that trust in him, and that sincerely come to him by Christ for mercy,* *Nahum. 1.7.*

It is then, not the abundance of sins committed, but the not coming heartily

to God by Christ for Mercy, that shun men out of doors: And though their not coming heartily may be said to be but a Sin; yet 'tis such a Sin, as causeth that all thy other sins abide upon thee unforgiven.

God complains of this. *They have not cried unto me with their hearts; They turned, but not to the most High. They turned feignedly,* Jer, 3.10. Hos. 7. 14, 16.

Thus doing, his Soul hates; but the Penitent, humble, broken hearted Sinner, be his Transgressions red as Scarlet, red like Crimson, in number as the Sand; though his transgressions cry to Heaven against him for Vengeance, and seem there to cry louder than do his Prayers, or Tears, or Groans for Mercy; yet he is safe. *To this man God will look,* Isa. 1. 18. chap. 66. 2. ~~sign be to God this b~~

Seventhly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners? Then here is ground for those, that as to practice, have Not been such, to come to him for mercy. ~~it is no good to~~

Although there is no Sin little of it self, because it is a contradiction of the Nature and Majesty of God; yet we must admit of divers numbers, and also of aggravations: Two Sins are not so

many as *three*; nor are *three*, that are done in ignorance, so big as *One* that is done against light, against knowledge, and Conscience. Also there is the Child in Sin, and a Man in Sin that has his Hairs gray, and his Skin wrinkled for very Age. And we must put a difference bewixt these sinners also. For can it be, that a Child of Seven, or ten, or sixteen years old, should be *such* a Sinner, a Sinner so vile in the Eye of the Law, as he is who has walked according to the course of this World, forty, fifty, sixty, or seventy Years? Now the Youth, this Stripling, though he is a Sinner, is but a little sinner, when compared with such.

Now I say, If there be room for the first sort, for those of the *biggest* size; certainly there is room for the *lesser* size? If there be a Door wide enough for a Gyant to go in at, there is certainly room for a Dwarf. If Christ Jesus has Grace enough to save great sinners, he has surely Grace enough to save little ones. If he can forgive *five hundred pence*, for certain he can forgive *fifty*, Luk, 7. 41, 42.

But you said before, that the little sinners must stand by, *till* the great ones have

received their grace, and that's discon-
raging!

I answer, There are two sorts of lit-
tle Sinners. such as are so, such as feign
themselves so. There are those that feign
themselves so, *that I intended there*, and
not those that are indeed comparatively
so. Such as feign themselves so, may
wait long enough before they obtain For-
giveness.

But again, A Sinner may be compara-
tively a little sinner, and sensibly a great
one. There is then *two sorts of greatness*
in sin; greatness by reason of number,
greatness by reason of thoroughness of
conviction of the horrible nature of Sin.
In this last sense, *he that has but one sin*,
if such a one could be found, may in his
own eyes find himself the biggest sinner
in the world. Let this Man, or this Child,
therefore put himself among the great
sinners, and plead with God as great sin-
ners do, and expect to be saved with the
great sinners, and as soon, and as heart-
ily as they.

Yea, a little sinner, that comparative-
ly is truly so, if he shall graciously give
way to Conviction, and shall in God's
light, diligently weigh the horrible na-
ture of his own sins, may yet sooner ob-
tain

tain Forgiveness for them at the hands of the heavenly Father, than he that has ten times his sins, and so cause to cry ten times harder to God for Mercy.

For the *grievousness* of the Cry is a great thing with God; for if he will hear the Widdow, if she cries *at all*, how much more if she cries most *grievously*? Exod. 22. 22, 23.

It is not the number, but the true sense of the abominable nature of Sin, that makes the Cry for Pardon lamentable. He, as I said, that has many sins, may not cry so loud in the ears of God, as he that has far fewer; he in our present sense that is in his own eyes the biggest sinner, is he that soonest findeth mercy.

The offer Then is to the Biggest sinner, to the biggest sinner First, and the mercy is first obtained by him that first confesseth himself to be such an one.

There are men that strive at the throne of Grace for Mercy, by pleading the greatness of their Necessity. Now their Plea, as to the prevalency of it, lieth not in their counting up of the *number*, but in the *sence* of the *greatness* of their sins, and in the *vehemeney* of their cry for Pardon. And it is observable, that though the Birth right was Rubins, and

for his foolishnes, given to the Sons of Joseph; yet *Judah* prevailed above his Brethren, and of him came the *Messias*,
1. Chron. 5. 1, 2.

There is a heavenly subtilitie to be managed in this matter. *Iby* *Brother* came with subtilitie and haukbraed away *i by* blessing. The blessing belonged to *Esau*, but *Jacob* by his diligence made it his own, Gen. 27. 35. The offer is to the biggest sinner, to the biggest sinner first, but if he forbears to cry, the sinner that is a sinner less by far than he, both as to number and the nature of transgression, may get the blessing first, if he shall have grace to bestir himself well; for the loudest Cry is heard furthest, and the most lamentable pierces sooneſt.

I therefore urge this Head, not because I would have little sinners go and tell God that they are little sinners, thereby to think to obtain his Mercy; for verily, so they are never like to have it: For such words declare, that such a one hath no true ſenſe at all of the nature of his ſins.

Sin, as I ſaid, in the nature of it, is horrible; though it be but one ſingle ſin as to act; yea, though it be but a ſinful

thought; and so worthily calls for the damnation of the Soul.

The Comparison then, of little and great Sinners, is to go for good sense among men? Due to plead the fewness of thy sins, or the comparative harmlessness of their quantity before God, argueth no sound knowledge of the nature of thy Sin, and so no true sense of the nature or need of Mercy.

Little Sinner when therefore thou goest to God, thought thou knowest in thy Conscience, that thou, as to acts, art no Thief, no Murderer, no Whore, no Liar, no false Swearer, or the like, and in reason must needs understand, that thou art not so profanely vile as others; yet when thou goest to God for Mercy, know no mans sins but thine own, make mention of no mans sins but thine own. Also labour not to lessen thy own, but magnifie and greater them by all just Circumstances, and be as if there was never a Sinner in the World but thy self. Also cry out as if thou wast the only undone Man; and that is the way to obtain God's Mercy.

It is one of the comeliest Sights in the World to see a little Sinner commenting upon the greatness of his sins; multiplying

ing, and multiplying them to himself, till he makes them in his own eyes bigger and higher than he seeth any other man's sins to be in the World; and as base a thing it is to see a man do otherwise, and as basely will come on to Luk. 18, 10, 14, 12, 13.

As therefore I said to the great Sinner before, let him take heed lest he presumeth I say now to the little Sinner, let him take heed that he doth dissemble; For there is as great an aptness in the little Sinner to dissemble, as there is in the great one. He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, be he a sinner little or great, Prov. 28, 13.

Eightly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners? Then this shews the true cause why Satan makes such heads as he doth against him.

The Father and the holy Spirit are well spoken of by all Divines, and deceived Parsons; Christ only is the Rock of Offence. Behold I lay in Zion a stumbling Stone and a Rock of Offence, Rom. 9, 33. Not that Satan careth for the Father or the Spirit more than he careth for the Son, but he can let men alone with their

notions

nations of the Father and the Spirit, son he knows they shall never enjoy the Father or the Spirit, if indeed they receive not the Merits of the Son. *He that hath the Son, hath Life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life,* however they may boast themselves of the Father and the Spirit. 1 John 5. 12. Again, *Whoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the Doctrine of Christ, hath not God: He that abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son.* 2 John 9.

Christ, and Christ only is he that can make us capable to enjoy God with Life and Joy to all eternity. Hence he calls himself *The Way to the Father; The true and Living Way,* Joh. 14. 6. Heh. 10. 19. 20. For we cannot come to the Father but by him. Satan knows this, therefore he hates him. Deluded Persons are ignorant of this, and therefore they are led up and down by Satan by the nose, as they are.

There are many things by which Satan has taken occasion to greater his page against Jesus Christ.

As first, His love to Man, and then the many expressions of that love. He hath taken Man's nature upon him; he hath in that nature fulfilled the Law to

bring in Righteousness for Man ; and hath spilt his Blood for the Reconciling of Man to God ; he hath broke the neck of Death, put away Sin, destroyed the works of the Devil, and got into his own hands the Keys of Death : and all these are heinous things to Satan. He cannot abide Christ for this. Besides, he hath eternal Life in himself, and that to bestow upon us ; and we in all likelihood are to possess *the very places*, from which the *Satans* by transgression fell, if not places more glorious. Wherefore he must needs be angry. And is it not a vexatious thing to him, that we should be admitted to the Throne of Grace by Christ, while he stands bound over in Chains of Darkness, to answer for his Rebellions against God and his Son, at the terrible day of Judgment. Yea, we poor Dust and Ashes must become his Judges, and triumph over him for ever ; and all this, long of *Jesus Christ* ; for he is the Meritorious Cause of all this.

Now though Satan seeks to be revenged for this, yet he knows it is in vain to attack the Person of Christ, he has overcome him ; therefore he tamps with a company of silly Men, that he may willie him by them. And they, bold fools

is the place, will not spare to spit in his face. They will rail at his Person, and deny the very Being of it ; they will rail at his Blood, and deny the Merit and worth of it. They will deny the very end, why he accomplished the Law, and by fogg, and tricks, and quirks, which he helped them to, they set up fond Names and Images in his place, and give the glory of a Saviour to them, Thus Satan workes and uses the Name of Christ; and his Ministers under the name of the Ministers of Righteousness.

And by his Wiles and Stratagems he findes a world of men ; But there is a Seed, and they shall serve him, and it shall be counted to the Lord for a Generation. People shall see their sins, and that is the Way to Happiness. These shall venture themselves both Body and Soul upon his Worthiness.

All this Satan Knows, and therefore his Agent is minded the more Wherefore according to his ability and allowance, he assaulteth, tempteth, abuseth, and stirs up what he can to be hurtful to these poor People, that he may, while his time shall last, make it as hard and difficult for them to go to eternal Glory as he can. Often times he abuses them with

with wrong apprehensions of God, and with wrong apprehensions of Christ. He also casts them into the Mire, to the reproach of Religion, the shame of their Brethren, the derision of the World, and dishonour of God. He holds our hands, while the World buffers us; he puts Bear-skins upon us, and then sets the Dogs at us. He bedaybeth us with his own Fome, and then tempts us to believe, that that bedawding comes from our selves.

Oh! the rage and the roaring of this Lion! and the hatred that he manifests against the Lord Jesus, and against them that are purchased with his Blood! But yet, in the midle of all this, the Lord Jesus sends forth his Herald to proclaim in the Nations, his love to the World, and to invite them to come into him for Life. Yea, his Invition is so large, that it offereth his Mercy in the first place to the biggest Sinners of every Age, which causeth the Devils rage the more.

wherefore, as I said before, fret the, some he, the Lord Jesus will divide the Spis in this great one a yea, he shall divide the Spis, by the stings of Spis he shall wound Christ his Soul, into death and

was numbered with the Transgressors, and
bore the sin of many, and made Intercession
for the transgressors, Isa. 53. 12.

Ninthly, Would Jesus Christ have
Mercy offered in the first place to the big-
gest Sinners? Let the Tempted bear upon
This string for their help and consolation.
The Tempted wherever he dwells, al-
ways thinks himself the biggest Sinner,
one most unworthy of eternal Life.
This is Satans master Argument,
Thou art a horrible Sinner, a Hypoc-
rite, one that has a profane heart, and
one that is an utter stranger to a work
of Grace: I say, this is his *Mind*, his
GATE his Master-piece; He doth with
this, as some do by their most interesting
Songs, sings them every where. I be-
lieve there are but few Saints in the
World that have not had this tempta-
tion sounding in their Ears. But were
they but aware, Satan by all this, doth
but drive them to the Gappou at which
they should go, and so escape his nois-
ing.

Saith he, Thou art a great Sinner, a
horrible Sinner, a profane hearted
Wretch, i one that cannot be imputed
for a Vile one in the Country. And
say I

And all this while Christ says to his
Ministers, offer Mercy in the first place
to the biggest Sinners. So that this
Temptation drives thee directly into
the Arms of Jesus Christ.

Was therefore the Tempted but aware, he might say, 'Ay Satan, I am, I am a Sinner of the biggest size, and therefore have most need of Jesus Christ: Yet, because I am such a wretched, therefore Jesus Christ calls me: yea, He calls me first: The first proffer of The Gospel is to be made to the ~~Jerusalem~~ sinner: I am he, wherefore stand back Satan, make a lane, my right is first to come to Jesus Christ.'

This now would be like somke. This would foil the Devil. (This) would make him say I must not deal with this man thus; for then I put a sword into his hand to cut off my head. (This) blow

¶ And this is the meading of **Peter**, when he saith, **Refuge** into the **fast** habitation of **God**, when **the** **world** **shall** **be** **over** **thrown**. And of **Paul** when he saith, **Take** **the** **Shield** **of** **Faith**, **with** **which** **ye** **shall** **be** **able** **to** **quench** **all** **the** **fiery** **Darts** **of** **the** **Wicked**; **Ephes. 6. 16.**

b Wherefore is it said, Begin at Jeru-
salem, if the Jerusalem Sinner is not to
have the benefit of it? And if I am to

have

have the benefit of it, let me call it to mind when Satan haunts me with the continual remembrance of my sins, of my *Jerusalem* sins. Satan and my Conscience says, I am the biggest sinner, Christ offereth Mercy in the first place to the biggest sinners. Nor is the manner of the Offer other but such as suiteth with my mind. I am sorry for my sin; yea, sorry at my heart that ever sinful Thought did enter, or find the least entertainment in my wicked mind: And might I obtain my Wish, I would never more that my heart should be a place for ought but the Grace, and Spirit, and Faith of the Lord Jesus.

I speak not this to lessen my Wickedness; I would not for all the World, but be placed by mine own Conscience in the very *front* of the biggest Sinners, that I might be one of the first that are beckoned by the gracious Hand of Jesus the Saviour, to come to him for Mercy.

Well Sinner, thou now speakest like a Christian, but say thus in a *strange* Spirit in the hour of Temptation, and then thou wilt, to thy commendation and comfort, quit thy self well.

This improving of Christ in dark hours, is the Life, though the hardest

part of our Christianity. We should neither stop at Darkness, nor at the raging of our Lusts, but go on in a way of venturing and casting the whole of our Affair for the next World, at the foot of Jesus Christ. This is the way to make the Darkness Light, and also to aye the raging of our Corruption.

The first time the *Passover* was eaten, was in the night; and when Israel took Courage to go forward, though the Sea stood in their way like a devouring Gulf, and the Host of the *Egyptians* follow them at the heels; yet the Sea gives place, and their Enemies were as still as a stone till they were gone over, *Exod.* 12. 8. *chap. 14.* 13, 14, 21, 22. *chap.* 15, 16.

There is nothing like Faith to help at a pinch; Faith dissolves Doubts, as the Sun drives away the Mists. And that you may not be put out, know your time, as I said, of believing is always. There are times when some Graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein Faith can be said to be so. Wherefore Faith must be always in exercise.

Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand, and one of these is of use all day long. Faith is to see, to receive, to work, on

to eat: and a Christian should be seeing or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe: *At what time, said the good man, I am afraid, I will trust in thee,* Psal. 56. 2, 3.

Nor can we have a better encouragement to do this, than is by the Text before us, even an open heart for a Jerusalem Sinner. And if for a Jerusalem Sinner to come, then for such an one, when come. If such a one To Be saved, then for such a one that Is saved. If for such a one To be pardoned his great transgressions, then for such a one who Is pardoned these, to come daily to Jesus Christ too, to be cleansed and set free from his common Infirmities, and from the Iniquities of his holy things.

Therefore let the poor Sinner that would be saved, labour for skill to make the best Improvement of the grace of Christ to help him against the temptations of the Devil and his Sins.

Tenously, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners? Let those men consider this, that (have, or) may in a day of

trial have spoken or done what their Profession or Conscience told them they should not, and that have the guilt and burden thereof upon their Consciences.

Whether a thing be wrong or right, Guilt may pursue him that doth contrary to his Conscience. But suppose a man should deny his God, or his Christ, or relinquish a good Profession, and be under the real guilt thereof? Shall he therefore conclude he is gone for ever? Let him come again with Peter's tears, and no doubt but he shall obtain Peter's Forgiveness. For the Text includes the biggest sinners.

And it is observable, That before this Clause was put into this Commission, Peter was pardoned his horrible Revolt from his Master. He that Revolteh in the day of Trial, if he is not shot quite dead upon the place, but is sensible of his Wound, and calls out for a Chyrurgion, shall find his Lord at hand to pour Wine and Oyl into his Wounds, that he may again be healed. And to encourage him to think that there may be Mercy for him: Besides what we find Recorder of Peter, you read in the Act, some was through the violence of their Trials, compelled to Blaspheme, and yet

yet are called Saints, *Acts 26. 9, 10, 11.*

Hence you have a Promise or two that speaks concerning such a kind of Men, to incourage us to think that at least some of them shall come back to the Lord their God. *Shall they fall, faith he, and not arise? Shall they turn away, and not return?* *Jer. 8. 4.* *And in that day I will assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that was driven out, and her that I have Afflicted.* *And I will make her that halteth a Remnant, and her that was cast off, a strong Nation;* *And the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Zion for ever.*

What we are to understand by her that halteth, is best expressed by the Prophet *Elijah, Mic. 4. 6, 7. Zeph. 3. 19. 1 Kings 18. 12.*

I will conclude then, that for them that have halteth, or may halt, the Lord has Mercy in the Bank, and is willing to accept them if they return to him again.

Perhaps they may never be after that of any great esteem in the House of God, but if the Lord will admit them to favour and forgiveness: O exceeding and undeserved Mercy! See *Ezek. 44. 10. 11. 12, 13, 14.*

Thou then that mayest be the Man; Remember this, that there is Mercy also for thee. Return therefore to God, and to his Son, who hath yet in store for thee, and who will do thee good.

But perhaps thou wilt say, He doth not save all Revolters, and therefore perhaps not me.

Answer, Art thou returning to God? If thou art returning, thou art the Man. Return ye backsliding Children, and I will heal your backslidings, Jer. 3. 22.

Some, as I said, that Revolt, are shot dead upon the place, and for them, who can help them? But for them that cry out of their Wounds, 'tis a sign they are yet alive; and if they use the means in time, doubtless they may be healed.

Christ Jesus has bags of Mercy that was never yet broken up, or unsealed. Hence it is said, he has goodness laid up; things reserved in Heaven for his. And if he breaks up one of these bags, who can tell what he can do!

Hence his Love is said to be such as passeth Knowledge, and that his Riches are unsearchable. He has, no body knows what; for no body knows who! He has by him in store for such as seem in the view of all men, to be gone beyond re-

covey.

covery. For this the Text is plain. What Man or Angel could have thought that the *Jerusalem-sinners* had been yet on this side of an impossibility of enjoying Life and Mercy? Hadst thou seen their actions, and what horrible things they did to the Son of God: Yea, how stoutly they backed what they did, with resolves and endeavours to persevere, when they had killed his Person, against his Name and Doctrine: And that there was not found among them all that while as we read of, the least remorse or regret for these their doings: Couldst thou have imagined that Mercy would ever have took hold of them, at least so soon! Nay, that they should, of all the World be counted those *Only* meet to have it offered to them in the *very first place*! For so my Text commands, saying, *Preach Repentance and Remission of Sin among all Nations, Beginning at Jerusalem.*

I tell you the thing is a Wonder, and must for ever stand for a Wonder among the Sons of Men. It stands also for an everlasting Invitation and Allurement to the biggest Sinners to come to *Christ* for Mercy.

Now

Now, since, in the Opinion of all Men, the Revolter is such a one; if he has, as I said before, any Life in him, let him take incouragment to come again, that he may live by Christ.

Eleventhly, Would Jesus Christ have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners? Then let God's Ministers tell them so. There is an Incidence in us, I know not how it doth come about, when we are Converted, to contemn them that are left behind. Poor fools as we are, we forget that we our selves were so. *Tit. 3. 2, 3.*

But would it not become us better, since we have tasted that the Lord is gracious, to carry it towards them so, that we may give them Convincing ground to believe, that we have found that Mercy which also sets open the Door for them to come and partake with us.

Ministers, I say, should do thus, both by their Doctrine, and in all other respects.

Austerity doth not become us, neither in Doctrine nor in Conversation: We our selves live by Grace; Let us give as we receive, and labour to perswade our fellow-sinners which God has left behind

hind us, to follow after that they may partake with us of Grace. We are saved by Grace, let us live like them that are *gracious*. Let all our things (to the World) be done in Charity towards them, Pity them, Pray for them, be familiar with them for their good. Let us lay aside our foolish, worldly, carnal grandure; Let us not walk the Streets, and have such behaviours as signify we are scarce for touching of the poor ones that are left behind, no not with a pair of *Tongs*. It becomes not Ministers thus to do.

Remember your Lord, he was familiar with Publicans and Sinners to a Proverb. Behold a gluttonous man, and a Wine-bibber, a friend of Publicans and Sinners, Matt. 11. 19. The first part, concerning his gluttonous eating and drinking, to be sure was an horrible slander; but for the other, nothing was ever spoke truer of him by the World. Now why should we lay hands cross on this Text, that is, choose good Victuals, and love the sweet Wine better than the Salvation of the poor Publican? Why not familiar with sinners provided we hate their spots and blemishes, and seek that they may be healed of them?

Why not fellowly with our Carnal Neighbours? If we do take occasion to do so, that we may drop, and be yet distilling some good Doctrine upon their Souls? Why not go to the poor Man's House, and give him a *Penny*, and a Scripture to think upon? Why not send for the Poor to fetch away, at least, the Fragments of thy Table, that the Bowels of thy fellow-sinner may be refreshed as well as thine?

Ministers should be Exemplary: But I am an inferior Man, and must take heed of too much meddling. But might I, I would meddle with them, with their Wives, and with their Children too. I mean not this of all, but of them that deserve it, though I may not name them.

But, I say, let Ministers follow the steps of their blessed Lord, who by Word and Deeds shewed his Love to the Salvation of the World, in such a carriage as declared him to prefer their Salvation before his own private Concern. For we are commanded to follow his steps, *who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.*

And as I have said concerning Ministers, so I say to all the Brethren, carry it

it so, that all the World may see, that indeed you are the Sons of Love.

Love your Saviour ; Yea, shew one to another that you love him, not only by a seeming love of Affection, but with the love of Duty. Practical Love is best. Many love *Christ* with nothing but the lick of the Tongue. Alas ! *Christ Jesus* the Lord, must not be put off thus : *He that bath my Commandments, and keepeth them, saith he, he it is that loveth me*, Joh. 14. 21.

Practical Love, which stands in Self-denial, in Charity to my Neighbour, and a Patient enduring of Affliction for his Name : This is counted Love.

Right Love to *Christ*, is that which carries in it a provoking Argument to others of the Brethren, Heb. 10. 24.

Should a Man ask me how he should know that he loveth the Children of God ? The best answer I could give him, would be in the Words of the Apostle John ; *By this, saith he, we know we love the Children of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments*, Joh. 5. 2.

Love to God and Christ, is then given, when we are tender of his Name ; and then we shew our selves tender of

his Name, when we are afraid to break any the least of his Commandments. And when we are here, then do we shew our love to our Brother also.

Now we have Obligation sufficient thus to do, for that our Lord loved us, and gave himself for us, to deliver us from Death, that we might live through him.

The World, when they hear the Doctrine that I have asserted and handled in this little Book, to wit, That *Jesus Christ* would have Mercy offered in the first place to the biggest Sinners; will be apt, because themselves are Unbelievers, to think that this is a Doctrine that leads to Looseness, and that gives Liberty to the Flesh; but if you that Believe, love your Brethren, and your Neighbours truly, and as you should, you will put to silence the ignorance of such foolish Men, and stop their mouths from speaking Evil of you.

And, I say, let the love of *Christ* constrain us to this. Who deserveth our Heart, our Mouth, our Life, our Goods, so much as *Jesus Christ*, who has bought us to himself by his Blood, to this very end, that we should be a peculiar People, zealous of good Works?

There

There is nothing more seemly in the World, than to see a Christian walk as becomes the Gospel ; nor any thing more unbecoming a Reasonable Creature, than to hear a man say, *I believe in Christ*, and yet see in his Life, Debauchery and Profaneness. Might I, such men should be counted the basest of men ; such men should be counted by all, unworthy of the Name of a *Christian*, and should be shunned by every good man, as such who are the very Plague of Profession.

For so it is written, *We should carry it towards them. Who so has a Form of Godliness, and deny the power thereof, from such we must turn away.*

It has oft-times come into my mind, to ask, by what means it is, That the Gospel Profession should be so Taunted with Loose and Carnal Gospellers ? And I could never arrive to better Satisfaction in the matter, than this, Such men are made Professors by the Devil, and so by him put among the rest of the Godly. A certain Man had a fruitless Figg-Tree planted in his Vineyrd ; but by whom was it planted there ? Even by him that sowed the Tares, his own Children, among the Wheat, *Luke 13. 6. Matt.*

13. 37, 38. 39, 40. And that was the Devil. But why doth the Devil do thus? Not of love to them, but to make of them Offences and Stumbling blocks to others. For he knows that a loose Professor in the Church, does more mischief to Religion, than ten can do to it that are in the World.

Was it not, think you, the Devil that stirred up the Damosel that you read of in *Acts 16.* to cry out, *These are the Servants of the Most high God, that shew unto us the way of Salvation?* Yes it was, as is evident, *For Paul was grieved to hear it.* But why did the Devil stir up her to cry so? But because that was the way to blemish the Gospel, and to make the World think that it came from the same hand as did her Sooth-saying and Witchery, *Ver. 16. 17, 18. Holiness, O Lord, becomes thy House for ever.*

Let therefore, whoever they be that profess the Name of *Christ*, take heed that they Scandal not that Profession which they make of him, since he has so graciously offered us, as we are Sinners of the biggest size, in the first place, his Grace to Save us.

Having thus far spoken of the riches of the Grace of Christ, and of the freeness of his Heart to imbrace the *Jerusalem-sinners*; it may not be amiss to give you, yet, *as a caution*, an intimation of one thing, namely, *That this grace and freeness of his Heart is limited to time and day; the which, whoso over-standeth, shall perish notwithstanding.*

For, as a King, who of Grace, sendeth out to his Rebellious People an offer of Pardon, if they accept thereof by such a day, yet beheadeth, or hangeth those that come not in for mercy until the *day or time be past*: So Christ Jesus has set the Sinner a day, *a day of Salvation, an acceptable time*, but he who standeth out, or goeth on in Rebellion beyond that time, is like to come off with the loss of his Soul, 2 Cor. 6. 2. Heb. 3. 13, 16, 17, 18, 19. chap. 4. 7. Luk. 19. 41, 42.

Since therefore things are thus, it may be convenient here to touch a little upon these particulars.

First, That this Day, or Time, thus limited, when it is considered with reference to this or that man; is, *oft-times*

undiscerned by the person concerned therein, and *always* is kept secret as to the *shutting up* thereof.

And this in the wisdom of God is thus, to the end no man, when called upon, should put off turning to God to another time: *Now, and to Day, is that and only that which is revealed in Holy Writ, Psal. 50. 22. Eccles. 12. 1. Heb. 2. 13, 16.*

And this shews us the desperate hazards which those men run, who when *invitation*, or *conviction* attends them, put off turning to God to be saved till another, and as they think, a more fit season and *time*. For many by so doing, defer this to do, till the day of God's patience and long-suffering is ended: and then, for their Prayers and **Cryes** after mercy, they receive nothing but mocks, and are laughed at by the God of Heaven, *Prov. 1. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. Isa. 65. 12, 13, 14, 15. chap. 66. 4 Zech. 7. 11, 12, 13.*

Secondly, Another thing to be considered is this, namely, that the day of God's grace with some men, *begins* sooner, and also sooner *ends* than it doth with others. Those at the *first* hour of the day, had their Call sooner than they

who

who were called upon to turn to God at the sixth hour of the day; yea, and they who were hired at the third hour, had their Call sooner than they who were called at the eleventh, *Matt. 20. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.*

1. The day of God's patience began with *Ishmael*, and also ended, before he was twenty years old. At thirteen years of age he was Circumciled; the next year after, *Isaac* was born; and then *Ishmael* was fourteen years old. Now that day that *Isaac* was weaned, that day was *Ishmael* rejected: and suppose that *Isaac* was three years old before he was weaned; that was but the seventeenth year of *Ishmael*; wherefore the day of God's grace was ended with him betimes, *Gen. 17. 24, 25. chap. 21. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10. Gal. 4. 30.*

2. *Cains* day ended with him betimes, for after God had rejected him, he lived to beget many Children, and build a City, and to do many other things. But alas, all that while he was a Fugitive and a Vagabond. Nor carried he any thing with him after the day of his rejection was come; but this doleful language in his Conscience, *From God's Face shall I be hid, Gen. 4. 10, 11. 12, 13, 14.*

3. *Esau*, Through his extravagancies would needs go sell his Birthright, not fearing (as other confident fools) but that yet the blessing would still be his, after which he lived many years; but all of them under the wrath of God, as was, when time came, made appear to his destruction; for when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, *Heb. 12.14*,

15, 16.

Many instances might be given, as to such tokens of the displeasure of God against such as fool away, as the Wise Man has it, the prize which is put into their hand, *Prov. 17. 16*.

Let these things therefore be a further caution to those that sit under the glorious sound of the Gospel, and hear of the Riches of the Grace of God in Christ to poor sinners.

To slight Grace, to despise Mercy, and to stop the Ear when God speaks, when he speaks such great things, so much to our profit, is a great provocation.

He offereth, he calls, he woes, he invites, he prays, he beseeches us in this day of his Grace to be reconciled to him: yea, and has provided for us the means of recon-

reconciliation himself: Now this despised, must needs be provoking; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

But some man may say unto me, Fain I would be saved, fain I would be saved by Christ: But I fear this day of Grace is past, and that I shall perish, notwithstanding the exceeding riches of the Grace of God.

Answer, To this doubt I would answer several things..

First, With respect to this day.

Secondly, With respect to thy desires.

Thirdly, With respect to thy fears.

First, With respect to the day; That is, whether it be ended with a man, or no.

1. Art thou jogged, and shaken, and molested at the hearing of the Word? Is thy Conscience awakened and convinced then, that thou art at present in a perishing state, and that thou hast need to cry to God for Mercy? This is a hopeful sign that this day of Grace is not past with thee. For usually they that are past Grace, are also in their Conscience past feeling, being seared with a hot iron. Eph. 4. 18, 19. 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2.

Consequently those past grace, must be such as are denied the awakening fruits of the Word Preached. *The dead that bears*

faies Christ, *shall live*; at least wile Christ has not quite done with them; the day of God's patience is not at an end with them, *John 5.25.*

2. Is there in thy more retired condition, Arguings, Strugglings, and Strivings with thy Spirit to perswade thee of the vanity of what vain things thou lovest, and to win thee in thy Soul to a choice of Christ Jesus, and his heavenly things? Take heed and rebel not, for the day of God's grace and patience will not be past with thee, till he saith, *His Spirit shall strive no more with thee*; for then the wo comes, when he *shall depart from them*; and when he saies to the means of Grace, *Let them alone*, *Hos.4.17.chap.9.12.*

3. Art thou visited in the Night seasons with dreams about thy state, and that thou art in danger of being lost? Hast thou Heart-shaken apprehensions when deep sleep's upon thee, of Hell, Death, and Judgment to come? These are signs that God has not wholly left thee, or cast thee behind his back for ever. *For God speaks once, yea twice, yet man perceives it not; in a Dream, in a Vision of the Night, when deep sleep falls upon man, in slumberings upon the Bed; then he opens the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that*

he may withdraw man from his purpose
(his sinful purposes) and hide pride from
man, Job 33. 14, 15, 16, 17.

All this while God has not left the sinner, nor is come to the end of his patience towards him, but stands, at least, with the door of Grace, a chair in his hand, as being loth, as yet to bolt it against him.

4. Art thou followed with affliction, and dost thou hear God's angry voice in thy afflictions ? Doth he send with the affliction an *Interpreter* to shew thee thy vileness ; and why, or wherefore the hand of God is upon thee, and upon what thou hast ; to wit, that it is for thy sinning against him, and that thou mightest be turned to him ? If so, thy *Summer* is not quite ended ; thy *Harvest* is not yet quite over and gone. Take heed, stand out no longer, lest he cause darkness, and lest thy feet stumble upon the dark mountains ; and lest while you look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness, Job. 8. 20. chap. 13. 15, 16, 17.

5. Art thou crossed, disappointed and waylaid, and overthrown in all thy foolish ways and doings ? This is a sign God has not quite left thee, but that he still

waits

waits upon thee to turn thee. Consider I say, has he made a hedge, and a Wall to stop thee? Has he crossed thee in all thou puttest thy hand unto? Take it as a call to turn to him, for by his thus doing, he shews he has a mind to give thee a better portion. For usually when God gives up men, and resolves to let them alone in the Broad Way, he gives them *Rope*, and lets them have their desires in all hurtful things, *H. f. 2. 6, 7, 8. 9, 10, 11, 12. 13. 14. Psal. 73. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. Rom. 14. 9.*

Therefore take heed to this also, that thou strive not against this hand of God: but betake thy self to a serious enquiry into the causes of this hand of God upon thee, and encline to think, 'tis because the Lord would have thee look to that, which is better than what thou wouldest suffice thy self withall. When God had a mind to make the Prodigal go home to his Father, he sent a Famine upon him, and depied him a Belly-full of the Husks which the Swine did eat. And observe it, now he was in his strait, he betook him to consideration of the good that there was in his Fathers House; yea, he resolved to home to his Father, and his Father dealt well with him; he received him

him with Musick and Dancing, because he had received him safe and sound, *Luks 15. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25; 26, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.*

6. Hast thou any enticing touches of the word of God upon thy mind ? Doth, as it were, some holy word of God, give a glance upon thee, cast a smile upon thee, let fall, though it be but one drop of its favour upon thy Spirit ; yea, though it staines but one moment with thee ? O ! then the day of Grace is not past ! The Gate of Heaven is not shut ! Nor God's Heart and Bowels withdrawn from thee as yet. Take heed therefore, and beware that thou make much of the Heavenly Gift, and of that good word of God of the which he has made thee tast. Beware, I say, and take heed, there may be a falling away for all this ; but, I say, as yet, God has not left thee, as yet he has not cast thee off, *Heb. 6. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.*

Secondly, With respect to thy desires, what are they ? Wouldest thou be saved ? Wouldest thou be saved with a thorow salvation ? Wouldest thou be saved from guilt, and filth too ? Wouldest thou be the servant of thy Saviour ? Art thou indeed weary of the service of thy old Master

Master the Devil, Sin and the World? And has these desires put thy Soul to the flight? Hast thou through desires betaken thy self to thy heels? Dost fly to him that is a Saviour from the wrath to come, for life? If these be thy desires, and if they be unfeigned, fear not: Thou art one of those *Runaways* which God has commanded our Lord to receive, and not to send thee back to the Devil thy Master again, but to give thee a place in his House, even the place which liketh thee best. *Thou shalt not deliver to his Master*, saies he, *the Servant which is escaped from his Master unto thee. He shall dwell with thee, even among you in that place which he shall chuse, in one of thy Gates where it liketh him best; thou shalt not oppress him*, Deut. 23.15,16.

This is a command to the Church, consequently to the Head of the Church; for all commands from God come to her through her Head. Whence I conclude, that, that as *Israel* of old was to receive the *Runaway-Servant* who escaped from a Heathen Master to them, and should not dare to send him back to his Master again: So Christ's Church now, and consequently Christ himself may not, will not refuse that soul that has made

his escape from Sin, Satan, the World and Hell, unto him; but will certainly let him dwell in his House, among his Saints, in that place which he shall choose, even where it liketh him best. For he saies in another place, *And him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.* In no wise, let his crimes be what they will, either for nature, multitude, or the attendance of aggravating circumstances.

Wherefore if thy desires be firm, sound, unfeigned, to become the saved of Christ, and his servant: Fear not, he will not, he will in no wise put thee away, or turn thee over to thy old Master again.

Thirdly, As to thy fears, whatever they are, let that be supposed which is supposed before, and they are groundless, and so of no weight.

Object. *But I am afraid I am not chosen, or chosen to salvation, though you called me fool a little before for so fearing.*

Ans^w. Though election is, in order, before calling, as to God, yet the knowledge of Calling must go before the belief of my Election, as to my self. Wherefore souls that doubt of the truth of their Effectual Calling, do but plunge themselves

selves into a deeper labyrinth of confusion that concern themselves with their election ; I mean, while they labour to know it before they prove their Calling. *Make your Calling, and so your Election sure,* 2 Pet. 1. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Wherefore, at present, lay the thoughts of thy Election by, and ask thy self these questions ; Do I see my lost condition ? Do I see salvation is no where but in Christ ? Would I share in this salvation by Faith of him ? And would I, as was said afore, be throughly saved, to wits from the fitch, as from the guilt ? Do I love Christ, his Father, his Saints, his Word and Ways ? This is the way to prove we are Elect. Wherefore, sinner, when Satan, or thine own heart seek to puzzle thee with Election ; say thou, I cannot tend to talk of this point now, but stay till I know that I am called of God to the fellowship of his Son, and then I will shew you that I am Elect, and that my name is written in the Book of Life.

If poor distressed souls would observe this Order, they might save themselves the trouble of an unprofitable labour under these unseasonable and Soul-sinking doubts.

Let us therefore, upon the sight of our wretchedness, fly and venturously leap into the Arms of Christ, which are now as open to receive us into his Bosom, as they were when nailed to the Cross. This is coming to Christ for Life a right ; this is right running away from thy Master to him, as was said before. And for this we have multitudes of Scriptures to support, encourage, and comfort us in our so doing.

But now let him that doth thus, be sure to look for it, for Satan will be with him to morrow, to see if he can get him again to his old service ; and if he cannot do that, then will he enter into dispute with him, to wit, about whether he be elect to Life, and called indeed to partake of this Christ; to whom he is fled for succour, or whether he comes to him of his own presumptuous Mind. Therefore we are bid, as to come, so to Arm ourselves with that Armour which God has provided ; that we may resist, quench, stand against, and withstand all the Fiery Darts of the Devil, *Ephes. 6. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.*

If therefore thou findest Satan in this Order to march against thee, remember that thou hadst this Item about it, and bereave

betake thy self to Faith and good Courage; and be sober, and hope to the End.

Object. But how if I should have sinned the sin unpardonable, or That called the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Answ. If thou hast, thou art lost for ever: But yet before it is concluded by thee that thou hast so sinned, know that they that would be saved by Jesus Christ, through faith in his blood, cannot be counted for such.

1. Because of the Promise, for that must not be frustrate: And that saies, *And him that cometh to Christ, he will in no wise cast.* And again, *Who so will, let him take of the Water of Life freely, Joh. 6. 37. Rev. 21 6. chap. 22. 17.*

But, I say, how can these Scriptures be fulfilled, if he that would indeed be saved as before, has sinned the sin unpardonable? The Scriptures must not be made void, nor their truth be cast to the ground. Here's a Promise, and here's a Sinner; a Promise, that saies he shall not be cast out that comes; and the sinner comes, wherefore he must be received: Consequently, he that comes to Christ for life, has not, cannot have sinned that sin for which there is no forgiveness.

And

And this might suffice for an answer to any coming soul, that fears, though he comes, that he has sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost.

2. But again, He that has sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost cannot come, has no heart to come ; can by no means be made willing to come to Jesus Christ for life ; for that he has received such an opinion of him, and of his things, as deters and holds him back.

1. He counteth this blessed Person, this Son of God, a *Magician*, a *Conjurer*, a *Witch*, or one that did, when he was in the World, what he did, by the power and spirit of the Devil, *Mat.* 9. 34. *Mat.* 12. 24, 25, &c. *Mar.* 3. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. Now he that has this opinion of this Jesus, cannot be willing to cast himself at his foot for life, or to come to him as the only way to God, and to Salvation. And hence 'tis said again, that such an one puts him to open shame, and treadeth him under foot, that is, by contemning, reproaching, vilifying, and despising of him, as if he were the vilest one, or the greatest Cheat in the World : and has therefore, as to his esteem of him, called him accursed, crucified him to himself, or counted him

one

One hanged, as one of the worst of Mis-
factors, *Heb. 6. 6.* and *chap. 10. 29.*
1 Cor. 12. 3.

2. *His Blood*, which is the meritorious cause of mans redemption, even the blood of the everlasting *Covenant*, he counteth an *unholy thing*, or that which has no more vertue in it to save a Soul from sin, than has the blood of a Dog, *Heb. 10. 29.* For when the Apostle saies, he counts it an *unholy thing*; he means, he makes it of less value than that of a *Sheep* or *Cow*, which were clean according to the Law. And therefore must mean, that his blood was of no more worth to him in his account, than was the blood of *Dog*, an *Affs*, or a *Swine*, which always was, as to sacrifices, rejected by the God of Heaven, as *unholy*, or *unclean*.

Now he who has no better esteem of Jesus Christ, and of his Death and Blood, will not be persuaded to come to him for Life, or to trust in him for Salvation.

3. But further, all this must be done against manifest Tokens to prove the contrary, or after the shining of Gospel Light upon the soul, or some considerable profession of him as the *Messias*, or that he was the Saviour of the World.

4. It must be done against manifest tokens

tokens to prove the contrary ; and thus the reprobate Jews committed it, when they saw the works of God which put forth themselves in him, and called them the works of the Devil and *Beelzebub*.

2. It must be done against some shining light of the Gospel upon them. And thus it was with *Judas*, and with those, who after they were enlightened, and had tasted, and had felt, something of the powers of the World to come, fell away from the Faith of him, and put him to open shame and disgrace, *Heb. 6. 3, 6.*

3. It must also be done after, and in opposition to ones own open profession of him. *For if after they have escaped the pollution of the World through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning; for it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment, (which is the Word of Faith) delivered unto them.*

4. All this must be done openly, before witnesses, in the Face, Sight, and View of the World, by Word, and Act. *This is the sin that is unpardonable; and he that hath*

done

thus done, can never, 'tis impossible he ever should be renewed again to repentance, and that for a double reason; first such an one doth say, *he will not*; and of him God saies, *he shall not have the benefit of Salvation by him*.

Object. *But if this be the sin unpardonable, why is it called the sin against the Holy Ghost, and not rather the sin against the Son of God?*

Answ. It is called the sin against the Holy Ghost, because such count the works he did, which were done by the Spirit of God, the works of the spirit of the Devil: Also because all such as so reject Christ Jesus the Lord, they do it in despight of that testimony which the Holy Ghost has given of him in the Holy Scriptures; for the Scriptures are the breathings of the Holy Ghost, as in all other things, so in that testimony they bear of the Person of the Works, Sufferings, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus Christ.

Sinner, This is the sin against the Holy Ghost. What saist thou? Hast thou committed it; nay, I know thou hast not, if thou wouldest be saved by Christ. Yea, 'tis impossible thou shouldst have done it; if indeed thou wouldest be saved by him.

No man can desire to be saved by him, whom he yet judgeth to be an Impostor, a Magician, a Witch. No man can hope for redemption by that Blood which he yet counteth an unholy thing. Nor will God ever suffer such an one to repent, who has after light, and profession of him, thus horribly, and Devil-like, contemned and trampled upon him.

True, Words, and Wars, and Blasphemies against this Son of Man are pardonable; but then they must be done ignorantly and in unbelief. Also all blasphemous thoughts are likewise such as may be passed by, if the Soul afflicted with them, indeed is sorry for them,
1 Tim. 1. 13, 14, 15. Mar. 3. 28.

All but this, Sinner, all but this! If God had said he will forgive one sin, it had been undeserved Grace: But when he saies, he will pardon all *but* one, this is grace to the height. Nor is that one unpardonable otherwise, but because the Saviour that should save them is rejected and put away.

Jacob's Ladder, Christ is *Jacob's Ladder* that reacheth up to Heaven, and he that refuseth to go by this Ladder thither, will scarce by other means get up so high. There is none other name gi-

ven under Heaven among men, whereby we must be saved. There is none other Sacrifice for sin than his; he *also*, and he *only*, is the Mediator that reconcileth men to God. And, Sinner, if thou wouldest be saved by him, his Benefits are thine; yea, though thou art a great and Jerusa-
lem Transgressor.



F I N I S.

158.2

Mark

